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From the author







AN  
ESTIMATE OF THE HUMAN MIND;

A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY  
INTO THE LEGITIMATE APPLICATION AND EXTENT  
OF ITS LEADING FACULTIES,  
AS CONNECTED WITH THE PRINCIPLES AND OBLIGATIONS OF  
THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

BY

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IN THE COUNTY OF DURHAM.

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*A NEW EDITION, WITH LARGE ADDITIONS.*

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LONDON:  
JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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IN bringing before the Public a new and enlarged edition of the following work, the Author is desirous of briefly stating its general nature and object, and the extent of the addition that has now been made to it. Accustomed as he has been from a very early period of life to contemplate the mind of man as the noblest work of the Creator, and as affording a subject of investigation inferior to no other in interest and importance, he has ever been anxious to view its various faculties and endowments in immediate relation to the great and paramount end for which they were created, and in their connection with those important principles and facts which have been made known to man by a direct revelation. While it is unquestionably true, as has frequently been averred, that the statements of revelation are not and cannot be at variance with the testimony of reason and experience, it is equally true that theories of physical or intellectual science,

always limited in the facts upon which they are based, cannot be allowed to contradict or supersede what has been distinctly and unequivocally revealed. It is, however, a gratifying and consolatory fact, that between the inductions of philosophy and the discoveries of revelation, when properly understood and applied, there is, in reality, no discrepancy.

In surveying the mind of man under this aspect, it appeared to the Author of the following pages that the great scheme of Christianity might be considered as bearing a relation and as directly addressing itself to one or other of the following faculties—his *Reason*—his *Will*—his *Conscience*—his *Imagination*—or his *Affections*. Circumstances led him, in the first instance, to prepare and publish a short dissertation on the first of these faculties. Proceeding in the same general line of thought, he extended his enquiries to three other leading faculties or susceptibilities of the mind—the *Will*—the *Imaginations*—and the *Affections*. In presenting to the Public this work, so far completed, his views of its character and object were expressed in the following terms: “That the object of these dissertations opens a very important and interesting view of the philosophy of the human mind cannot, I conceive, be doubted. In many of its departments indeed, this comprehensive subject has undergone



frequent and profound discussion. Upon these points I have endeavoured, without, I trust, any undue claim to originality, to express the result of the unbiassed exercise of my own thoughts. In some of its branches, however, especially that which relates to the legitimate use of the Imagination, it did not seem altogether destitute of novelty, and I have attempted to mark out, with some distinctness, the limits which must guard and regulate the excursions of this noble faculty—a faculty which has doubtless been implanted in our nature for the highest and most important purposes.”

“That in such a difficult and extensive range of inquiry there are many imperfections, I cannot but be painfully conscious. At a time, however, in which the powers of the human mind are so closely examined, and the study of metaphysical science is in so many instances alloyed by a spirit of scepticism and infidelity, such a work, it may be hoped, will not be without its use. Extreme opinions upon speculative questions I have cautiously avoided, and have endeavoured to point out their danger: nor is there a single difficulty started in the course of these discussions, the force of which has not, at some time or other, weighed upon my own mind. And if the fruit of what may be called this mental experience should be, in any degree, instrumental

in relieving similar embarrassments in the minds of others, my labours will be amply repaid."

There was one department of the mind, however, which was still left untouched, except so far as it was involved in the discussions relating to the exercises of the Will. The Author indeed hesitated for some time whether this faculty might not, with greater propriety, be considered as belonging to the practical department of the human character, and as forming a part of moral science, which has reference to the duties of man as an individual and as a member of society. Several years ago he was invited by some members of the Council of the London University to offer himself as a candidate for the Professorship of Moral and Political Philosophy in that Institution. Although by various considerations he was induced ultimately to decline that invitation, he was led by it to direct his attention in a more special manner to the question of Christian Ethics, as standing in close connection with those investigations in which he had already been engaged. The Dissertation on the Conscience as connected with the Moral Law, now incorporated into this work, was the first result of these inquiries. So far as the Faculties of the Mind itself are concerned therefore, the object which the Author had proposed to himself, may be considered as completed. He has long con-

templated another Work, the design of which would be to exhibit the practical application of the Principles here attempted to be established, in their bearing on the Character and Conduct of Man in his several relations as a Christian and as a member of civil and domestic society. Whether he shall ever be able in any degree to accomplish such an undertaking, must be left to circumstances and events, which are altogether beyond his control. From the pressure of immediate duties, he is for the present obliged to put it altogether in abeyance. He is thankful, however, in having been enabled so far to carry his general plan into effect as to bring within the range of inquiry all the leading Faculties of the Human Mind in their bearing on the most important of all questions.

On the Theory of Morals, as connected with the Conscience, without neglecting the various systems, which have been long before the public, the Author endeavoured to direct his attention to those sources, from which alone correct views can be derived—the constitution of the mind itself—the order and administration of the universe, and the discoveries of Divine Revelation. Paley, though by no means so unsound as he has frequently been considered in his general principle—that of utility as the foundation of virtue—has carried that principle too far into the naked details of moral calculation. Butler, on the

other hand, the Author considers as having decidedly assigned an undue supremacy to the Conscience as an isolated Faculty, in a great degree dependent as it is for the correctness of its judgments upon the views of the understanding. From all that he has been able to deduce from a careful contemplation of the various phenomena of the Divine Government, the result, to which he has been inevitably led, is, that Happiness is the inseparable associate, and cannot fail eventually to rise to the level, of Moral Excellence, and that, correlatively, Misery is the consequence, and by Divine appointment, the ultimate limit of Moral Evil.

The former Edition of this Work met with a reception on the part of a large proportion of the public press, which more than satisfied the expectations of the Author. The present Edition, he ventures to hope, from the slight corrections it has undergone, and the important addition, which has been made to it, presents a somewhat higher claim. To students in theology, and others, who wish to pursue their literary and philosophical inquiries in subordination to the higher demands of sacred and revealed truth, he trusts that the Work may be of some service; and he cannot better express his own views and feelings on this subject, than in the language of the learned and eloquent Bishop Reynolds :

“ If then, we be careful to Moderate, and Regulate our Affections, to take heed of the pride and inflation of Secular learning, not to admire Philosophy, to the prejudice of Evangelical knowledge, as if without the revealed light of the Gospel, salvation might be found, in the way of Paganism; if we suffer not these lean Kine to devour the fat ones, nor the River Jordan to be lost in the Dead Sea,—I mean Piety to be swallowed up of profane Studies; and the knowledge of the Scriptures, (which alone would make any man conversant in all kind of Learning with much greater Felicity, and success,) to be undervalued, and not rather, the more admired, as a rich Jewel compared with Glass. In this case, and with such care as this, there is no doubt but secular studies prepared and corrected from Pride and Profaneness, may be to the Church, as the Gibeonites were to the Congregation of Israel, for Hewers of Wood, and Drawers of Water; otherwise we may say of them as Cato Major to his son, of the Grecian arts and learning, ‘ *Quandocunque ista Gens suas literas dabit, omnia corrumpet.*’ ”

The Author would only further add, that the Introductory and Concluding Dissertations have been deemed no inappropriate appendages to the body of the Work—the first as illustrative of the natural tendency of a well-directed exercise of the Faculties

of man to purify the outer court of his moral character—the second as expressive of the indispensable necessity of a Divine influence, in order to give full effect to every subordinate agency in the spiritual transformation of the inner man.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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—— Range the spacious intellectual field,  
And gather every fruit of sovereign power,  
To heal the moral maladies of man.—YOUNG.

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Illa vero quæ proprie ac pure Scientia nominatur, quia ratione et intelligentia  
paratur, mala esse quomodo potest?—AUGUSTINE.



## INTRODUCTION.

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BEFORE we enter on the discussion of the proper use and application of the various faculties of the mind in connexion with the principles and obligations of religion, it may not be amiss to preface a brief inquiry into the influence which the general pursuit of knowledge appears calculated to exert on the character of the individual and the welfare of society. The time in which we live, indeed, is not so remarkable for the splendour of its discoveries, nor for any extraordinary advances that have been made into regions of truth hitherto unexplored. It is not so much the *march* of intellect, except in some few directions, that we have an opportunity of witnessing, as the *perambulations* of intellect—the busy and active evolutions of intellect within those remote outposts, which transcendent genius, favoured by the untrodden novelty of the path of investigation, has already fixed. This is no reflection upon the vigour and originality of living talent. The human faculties, in their most enlarged dimensions, are limited in their capabilities, and as the sphere over which they are required to spread becomes expanded, it is natural to expect that they should appear to lose something of their profundity of research and of their intensity of force. Since the days of Bacon and his illustrious followers in the path of scientific

discovery, the field of science has immensely widened, and, with all the facilities that have been provided, it now requires no ordinary measure of labour and industry and strength, in any of the more extensive branches of knowledge, to learn what others have taught. It is true, indeed, that, by every accession to its store, the human mind is enriched, not merely by such an amount of intellectual gain to be added to its former resources, but also by the increased ability which it imparts for the further acquisition of treasures, which had been otherwise beyond its reach; so that mental attainment becomes a species of floating capital, having a tendency, when duly employed and wisely directed, to accumulate in the ratio of compound interest. But it is also true that life is short—that its duties are numerous and distracting—that the most vigorous powers must be in some degree bewildered by multiplicity, and wearied by ceaseless effort; and, therefore, it is no wonder that an age, which enjoys the fruits of the most intense and concentrated energy which the human intellect is capable of exerting upon some of the sublimest and most interesting departments of science, should present few instances of actual and important discovery.

But though it were granted that the present is not an age of extraordinary individual genius, it can at least be denied by none, that it is an age of unparalleled general knowledge. Science, information, taste, are no longer confined to a privileged few, shining in rare and solitary brightness amidst the expanse of surrounding vacaney; but ten thousand



lights, liable in some degree, indeed, to eclipse each other, but increasing the splendour of the whole, have almost simultaneously started into existence, and covered the face of the hemisphere. From the metropolis of the land to the remotest manufacturing town, scientific institutions have sprung up, in which knowledge, in its various departments, is cultivated as an embellishment to rank—as a resource against disquietude and care—as an instrument of self-cultivation—as a means of usefulness, respectability, and success, and as a relaxation from manual toil. From the universities of the realm to the lowest village-school, literature and science, in their appropriate branches, are pursued with an ardour and intensity, which, upon a scale so general and extensive, were unknown to ages that are past, and assume the character of a grand experiment upon human society. Hence the importance of ascertaining, as nearly as possible, what is likely to be the result, and what is the genuine tendency of such a mighty power brought to operate upon human minds. Knowledge has now ceased to be a luxury confined to the few sons of genius, who were accustomed to be regarded as the lords of the creation, and has become the common fare—the great marketable commodity—the staple of social commerce. So much the more necessary it is, therefore, to determine, so far as we are capable of determining, whether it be of a nature, in this extent and diffusiveness of circulation, to exert an influence, salutary or noxious, upon the body politic;—whether it be calculated, in its ultimate results, to advance the real interests of the species.

Many there are, indeed, to whom, though perhaps on opposite grounds, such an inquiry must appear altogether needless. They consider the question, either in its favourable or obnoxious bearing, so clear and decisive, as that, instead of a problem to be solved, or a theorem to be demonstrated, it assumes, in their estimation, the form of an axiom, which it were absurd to attempt to demonstrate. To one class of warm and impassioned theorists, the cultivation of the human mind, the expansion of the popular intellect to the last verge of possible enlargement, appears to be so pure, simple, and unmixed a good, as to be scarcely capable of perversion or misapplication—as to stand distinct and isolated from all contact—to be unalloyed by the least amalgamation with one element of evil. Not content with the great philosophical maxim, that “knowledge is power,” they come little short of maintaining that knowledge is virtue—that knowledge is piety—that knowledge is happiness—that knowledge is, in fact, what it had baffled the skill and escaped the penetration of so many ancient philosophers clearly to perceive and satisfactorily to determine—the *summum bonum* of human nature. Others there are, who view the pursuits of knowledge in its more advanced stages, and as impregnating the great mass of the community with a spirit of eager, active, and energetic effort, with a very different eye. Not denying that a cultivated understanding is a noble and exalted distinction—that a refined taste is a source of exquisite gratification—and that literary accomplishments are a rich possession unto those whose character and

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circumstances afford them an opportunity of usefully laying them out,—they imagine that the endeavour to extend these endowments beyond the mystic enclosure of rank and profession, is an attempt not less perilous than it is needless and unwise.

Amidst this conflicting array of sentiments upon a subject which daily assumes a character of more serious and weighty interest, sentiments on either side of which great and respectable authorities are marshalled, it becomes the business of the calm and enlightened observer to endeavour to form his just and impartial estimate with a due regard to the legitimate claims and prospects of every class and member of the community. Extreme opinions upon a question of this difficult and complicated nature—opinions which are almost invariably cherished by habits and connexions, and tinctured by prejudices, religious or political—are seldom correct or safe. It seems, therefore, to be an investigation not less interesting in itself than required by the spirit of the present times, and accordant with the object and design of the following work, to take a survey of the legitimate influence which the exercise of the human faculties upon subjects of literature and science, in their most general and unfettered developement, appear calculated to exert upon the character and happiness of society. Upon the most superficial view of the matter, it appears, like almost every other question, indeed, connected with man in his present state, to be of a mixed nature; combining, in this instance, much positive and palpable good, with a liability to great and portentous evil; not forgetting, however,

as I trust it will be seen in the sequel, that on a candid estimate of the case, the proportion of the former seems vastly to preponderate over any likelihood of the latter. A powerful writer of the present day\* has portrayed, with his usual energy of conception and depth of colouring, the "Evils of popular Ignorance."

It is still an object not less important and not less imperatively called for by the circumstances of the age, and which it were to be wished that the same masterly hand had undertaken, to point out the benefits and the possible attendant evils of popular Knowledge. When I speak of the evils of knowledge, it must be sufficiently obvious that I refer not to any inherent quality existing in the subject itself, but to that deterioration or perversion to which every organ of power, every instrument of influential agency, usefulness, and perfection is, under some circumstances, liable in the hand of man. In accordance with the method adopted throughout nearly the whole of this work, it will be our endeavour, in the prosecution of the following inquiry, to exhibit the subject under a two-fold aspect: first, showing the beneficial effects calculated to result from it when duly regulated and controlled; and secondly, pointing out some of the dangers against which it is necessary to guard in the pursuit of it, and of the evils which, without due care and vigilance, cannot fail to be associated with it. The peculiar aspect under which, as most closely connected with the general design,

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\* Foster.

we propose to present the beneficial influence of literary and scientific pursuits, is the relation in which they stand to the interests of morality, and their efficacy as a subordinate instrument in purifying the character from the defilements of depravity and vice.

I am willing to acknowledge, that it is principally in this view of the case that I have been always disposed to contemplate those literary Institutions of various ranks and orders, which have of late years so thickly sprung up in our land, and the progress of science throughout the world. It is true, indeed, that scientific investigations, properly so called, are, for the most part, directed to the elucidation of the diversified forms and modifications of matter and motion; a department of philosophical research in the highest degree useful and important. By a minute and accurate observation of the powers of nature, as exhibited in actual experiments, we lay the foundation of a more intelligent and comprehensive view of the laws by which it is regulated. We learn to generalize our ideas—to resolve what is more complicated in operation into the simplicity of a common cause—to melt down, as it were, the endless and bewildering particulars of analogous facts into one primary principle, and thus to trace the footsteps of one governing and presiding agency pervading the whole universe. But interesting, and capable of the most salutary direction, as are the more immediate pursuits of physical science, as connected with the facts which they evolve, and the practical uses to which they are subservient, it is



chiefly in reference to the moral influence which they are calculated to exert upon the character of those who are employed in them, that their importance is to be estimated as engaging the attention of the great mass of society. By thus associating the two great departments of philosophy, the physical and the moral, they will be found to enliven and illustrate each other: the former will be raised from a state of lifeless and grovelling materialism; and the latter, from being a system of dry abstractions and subtile distinctions, will become embodied in every phenomenon in nature, and interwoven with every exercise of the intellectual faculties. The interests of morality, both as a matter of state, and much more as constituting an essential ingredient of that religion, without which man cannot possibly secure the great end of his existence, appear to me so transcendent and paramount in their claims, that the expediency of the general pursuit of knowledge itself must be altogether estimated by its tendency to subserve and cherish them. Could the point for one moment be regarded as problematical, whether the pursuits of literature and science are calculated to operate favourably or otherwise upon the moral and religious habits of society, we should deem all other considerations, of a political or secular nature, as utterly incapable of establishing any legitimate claim for support; and they would appear so upon this ground, that, according to the known and clearly revealed constitution of things, it is impossible any order of pursuits should be really and finally advantageous, which is adverse to these habits. If, on the

other hand, we are fully persuaded, and if we are supported in the conviction by every thing in history and analogy and philosophy, which can throw light upon the subject, that Science, soberly and dispassionately pursued, has a tendency, however resisted in particular instances, to exert an elevating and purifying influence upon the character of man, without violating any duties of a prior and more commanding obligation, then we know not what further is necessary to demonstrate its utility, and to enforce, in that exclusive view of the question, a fair demand upon our attention. In reality, it requires nothing more, than clearly to demonstrate the genuine moral effects, which the cultivation of the human mind upon the most extensive scale is calculated to produce, when duly regulated and wisely directed; to neutralize all objections that can be raised against it, and to recommend every legitimate mode of promoting it, to the countenance and support of every man who values the best interests of his species.

When we speak of the moral influence of Science, it is not meant to be affirmed that it operates with a direct and invariable power in the production of this effect, and that every man of genius, or of literary habits and philosophical attainments, is of necessity a moral man. History, and perhaps personal experience, have supplied us with too many melancholy instances of the reverse. In heathen countries it cannot be matter of surprise that the pursuit of knowledge should have been frequently associated with profligacy of manners. Where the laws of

morality were in many respects but imperfectly understood, obscurely and indistinctly defined, and inadequately sanctioned—where the code of social rights and civil obedience, suggested and limited by reasons of state and views of present interest, was the only guide of conduct to which any real authority attached—where the reigning superstition, from the power of whose ascendent influence very few, even of the most enlightened and best informed, were able completely to emancipate themselves, embodied many of the grosser vices as component parts of that system of religious worship which it enjoined, it is no wonder that the practice of genuine virtue should, in many instances, have failed to keep pace with the cultivation of knowledge. In the absence of a specific principle of morality, which carries its own sanction, and stands independent of the variable and fluctuating notions of political expediency, it is no wonder that mere knowledge should have proved insufficient to effect an entire reformation in the habits of those by whom it was prosecuted with so much success\*. Socrates himself was far

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\* There are few subjects of importance upon which philosophers have more widely differed from each other, and in many instances more grievously wandered from the truth, than the ultimate ground of moral obligation: and, as immediately connected with this point, their opinions have no less varied with respect to the real nature and essence of virtue; some placing it, as Clarke and most of the leading sects of ancient philosophy, in the propriety and fitness of things; others, among whom are Cudworth and More and Hutcheson, in disinterested benevolence; and a third class, at the head of which may be set Epicurus, in mere prudence. The late Dr. Brown identifies virtue with obligation, and resolves them both into a mere feeling of approveableness, a principle differing in



from being a correct and unexceptionable moralist. That the lessons of wisdom uttered by his lips should have effectually restrained the exorbitant

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nothing but in terms from Dr. Hutcheson's "Moral Sense." It is lamentable to see a writer of so much talent and good feeling, in a work in many respects of such pre-eminent merit as his *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, laying the weight of the whole system of human duty upon so weak and precarious a basis, as a mere feeling of individual approbation, liable to be modified, and even utterly perverted, as it is, by every change of circumstances, and by every variety of intellectual and physical condition. And it is remarkable that so acute a writer did not perceive, that, in answering objections to his system, arising from some barbarous practices prevalent among savage nations, to which the sentiment of approveableness is unequivocally attached, he was altogether shifting his ground, when he explained these abominable perversions by referring them to a mistaken notion of utility. After his eloquent and triumphant exposure of the system of Expediency under the name of Selfishness, he does not seem to be aware that in this instance he was assuming its leading principle as the very foundation of that approveableness, by which he limits—"Obligation, Virtue, Merit." I am glad to find some of Brown's errors upon this and other points judiciously corrected by Dr. Dewar, in his useful work on Moral Philosophy and Christian Ethics, lately published. That there is such a principle in human nature as a "Moral Sense," I am fully persuaded; but to maintain that this, or any other Sense constitutes the only *obligation* of morality, is as false and absurd as it would be to affirm, that a *feeling* of gratitude is the sole *obligation* by which a child is bound to obey his parent. Let the feeling be extinguished, and the obligation at once ceases. The only adequate foundation of human duty, unquestionably rests in the independent will of a Supreme Being, regulated by wisdom, rendered amiable and engaging by goodness, and enforced by infinite power. To render this effectual, indeed, as will be shewn in a subsequent part of this work, there must be a correspondent susceptibility of moral approbation implanted in the mind; but the *obligation*, which is external and independent, is surely a widely different thing from a disposition to recognise it, which is personal and inherent.

passions and ungovernable excesses of his pupil Alcibiades, the irregularity of whose conduct was exceeded only by the extent and universality of his talents, could hardly have been expected. It was, doubtless, a rare, if a real, instance of the influence of philosophy, which is related of the young man of dissolute habits, whose character was completely changed in consequence of his having been led accidentally to hear a lecture of morality in one of the schools of Greece. And eminent as Julius Cæsar was for the variety of his literary and scientific attainments—distinguished no less for his love of knowledge than for his love of conquest—pursuing the study of astronomy and mathematics amidst the tumult of camps and the din of battles—appearing no less anxious to determine the laws of the planetary motions than to settle the destinies of nations—combining, in short, such a multiplicity of shining qualities, as made Lord Bacon to esteem him the greatest of all the characters of antiquity, he was at the same time, if not the slave, at least the devotee of his passions, and disfigured by vices, which have tarnished the lustre of his fame.

I am far from thinking, indeed, that philosophy alone is sufficient to purify the manners of society. I am persuaded that without the aid of a higher and more commanding principle, it can by no means adequately correct and regulate the hidden springs of character, upon the accuracy and precision of whose impulses, the rectitude of the outward movements altogether depends. The experience of nearly half a dozen centuries, during which it simultaneously

or successively flourished in Greece and Rome, to say nothing of its effects in modern times, sufficiently demonstrates this fact. The more inward and retired habits of the mind must fall under the influence and control of another principle. But to clear the outer court of the human character—to lop off the wild excrescences of passion—to remove the base funguses of vice and immorality, which may adhere to the goodly tree of human life—to perform this subordinate and preparatory work, we are convinced that, in general, the pursuits of knowledge are calculated to be of essential service.

Who, for example, can look abroad into the world, and contemplate its varying aspects at different periods of its history, and not be impressed with the conviction, that the progress of science has a tendency to *refine* and *humanize* the character. It is a trite maxim drawn from a heathen source, but it in no degree militates against the principles or precepts of the Christian religion, that \* “*to have thoroughly learnt the liberal sciences softens the manners, and does not allow them to be barbarous.*” This is eminently the case with respect to nations and civil communities. Survey man for a moment in the state of ignorant and undisciplined nature—not as he may dwell in the solitude of individual existence, but as herding with a clan marked by the same savage ferocity with himself, and distinguished mainly by their shape from the quadrupeds which they chase

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\* ——— Didicisse fideliter artes  
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.

along the forests. What are his occupations? Not to exercise his faculties upon any noble and useful pursuit—not to employ his intellectual powers in the investigation of what is true, and in the contemplation of what is beautiful and fair over the wide domains, and in the inexhaustible stores of creation—not to direct those physical energies, with which he is endued, to some department of salutary and ingenious labour. These are pursuits to which he is a stranger, too refined and intricate for his apprehension—too sublime for his remotest conception. What are his pleasures? Not the elevated gratifications, which arise from the commerce of minds—from the interchange of ideas—from the communication of knowledge and information—from the civilities and comparative elegancies of social life, not the pure and exquisite delights, which spring from the exercise of the domestic and relative affections. These are enjoyments, of which he knows as little as he does of the pursuits and employments prevalent among the inhabitants of another planet. The indulgence of the grossest appetites of nature, carried to an excess, frequently destructive of health and even life—instinctive sagacity exerting itself in schemes of treachery and fraudulent advantage—native courage displaying its vehement energies in every form of cruelty, and ferocity, and rage—in mutual slaughter and devastation, and expeditions of sanguinary revenge for the insults and injuries of a rival tribe—these are the only occupations in which he delights, and the advantages of which he has learnt to understand. An African Chief, who adorns the

walls of his palace with the scalps of his conquered enemies, may in fact be considered as a fair representative of the habits and dispositions of man in the state of ignorant, untutored, and unreclaimed nature. And so far is this from being an exaggerated representation, and such as applies only to some extraordinary instances of ferocity, it may be safely asserted, that, with very slight variations, before they were visited by the softening beams of knowledge and civilization, this was the aboriginal condition of every nation upon earth. It was the light of truth gradually arising above the horizon, and dissipating with its orient beams the mists of ignorance and error, which developed the faculties, that lay dormant in the torpor of unconscious existence, which prepared and capacitated man for performing the real functions of humanity. It was this genial sun, which, visiting the cold and cheerless wastes of savage life, and penetrating what we may call the polar regions of human intellect,

Called nature from her ivy-mantled den,  
And soften'd human rock-work into men.

But there is a state of ignorance essentially different from that of savage nature, but which exhibits few of the fair and engaging features of humanity in a state of advanced civilization and intellectual culture. It is true, that the most polished state of society is not without its vices—it is true, that luxury, voluptuous refinement, and excess, frequently associate themselves with a considerable measure of literary refinement and taste—that mind in some of its subordinate departments becomes leagued with the depraved

propensities of nature, and employs its powers in throwing a specious and imposing varnish over the tube, which conveys moral pollution in the form of intellectual gratification, to the character. It is true, that human nature, even in its most enlightened order, and after learning and philosophy have exerted their utmost power in purifying it from the dregs of sensual appetite, evinces too much of an instinctive affinity with what is corrupt, too much of an elective attraction for what is base and deteriorating in the moral elements, with which it is surrounded. But amidst scenes of rude ignorance, where reason and intellect have never attempted to assert their dignity and independence, and to claim their legitimate ascendancy over the inferior powers of nature: where a system of physical energies and propensities, acting as by mechanical impulse, and operating without salutary control, is regarded as constituting the whole of the man, the original evils, and tendencies of the human character will present themselves in forms infinitely more odious and revolting. We have read, indeed, of scenes of Arcadian innocence, where unsophisticated nature, without the aid of science and art, contributed everything that was necessary to consummate the idea of human felicity—and while contemplating the enchanting colours in which a vivid fancy has portrayed those forms of shadowy existence, we have been tempted to exclaim

Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.

But those, whose opportunities have made them acquainted with the realities of human character in these retreats of sequestered ignorance—in these



back-grounds of the intellectual scene, are perfectly aware that the picture is illusory. They know that these bright creations of untaught innocence and rustic blessedness exist only in the regions of poetry and romance, and that a state of gross and rude ignorance is but another form of expression for a state of degrading vice, and in many instances of brutal violence.

In such a state of society you will in vain look for anything like nicety of principle—a dignified sense of honour—refinement of feeling or delicacy of language—sentiments and habits, which the expansion of the mind and the pursuit of knowledge have such an obvious tendency to engender and to cherish. There you will in vain, except in some very extraordinary instances, look for those tender and soothing sensibilities of domestic life pervading and mutually attaching the several members of a family to each other; for those decencies of deportment, those proprieties of outward habit, those civilities of intercourse and address, which impart a character of serenity and blandness to the atmosphere of human society. The most valuable and fertile districts of the rational and intellectual nature, are in those cases wholly uncultivated; a wild and uncleared forest, into which a noble, elevated, and refined idea never happens by any possible chance to straggle, but where evil passions, like so many ferocious and venomous beasts, range at will, and grow to a portentous magnitude. Mutual animosity, ready upon the slightest occasion of insult or provocation to kindle into a flame of violent revenge—trials of strength, outraging every principle

of virtue and humanity, exhibited, perhaps, to the gaze of admiring spectators—cruelty sometimes carried to the excess of the most wanton barbarity exercised towards the lower animals—these are the features which most prominently stand forth to the eye in the character of an ignorant and unenlightened community. And if the diffusion of the light of knowledge, independently of the operations of a higher principle, which is now so rapidly spreading among us, should do nothing more than soften down something of this grosser hardihood—than remove some of these more palpable asperities and disfigurements of our nature, I think that an important step will have been gained towards meliorating the habits of society, and more generally elevating the moral standard of the land.

For an illustration of the point under our present consideration, we need not travel beyond the boundaries of the British empire. Let us for a moment look into the neighbouring island. We do not mean to enter into the political or religious questions connected with that country, but simply to notice the phenomena of the intellectual darkness and moral degradation which it presents, as illustrative of the point before us. From all the accounts we have seen or heard of that country, amidst the numerous individual instances of splendid talents and extensive acquirements which it presents, the whole, or at least, the chief part of its lower rank of population, is involved in the most abject ignorance. Its condition, in a civil and intellectual point of view, may justly be described as that of semi-barbarism—just emerging above the horizon of total darkness, but in vain



struggling to rise to the meridian of mental illumination and knowledge. And what is the consequence, or rather what is the necessary attendant of this state of rude and untutored ignorance? It is just what might have been expected. There we behold in their full force, and operating with mischievous and destructive energy, those violent and untamed qualities of human nature in its uncivilized or half-civilized state, which we have represented it to be an obvious tendency of knowledge and cultivation to soften, refine, and humanize. *There* are far more frequently witnessed than in any other part of the united kingdom, scenes of rapine and bloodshed. There, in short, is confusion and every evil work.

From Ireland, let us transfer our survey to the northern parts of this island, and contemplate the noble and generous spirit—the feeling of honorable independence—the habits of regularity, sobriety, and economy—the quietness and content—the domestic tenderness and hospitality, which, from all we have been able to learn, distinguish the population of Scotland. How are we to account for this striking and acknowledged superiority? It is unphilosophical and absurd to seek for the cause of it in any diversity in the original elements of the intellectual stamina or the physical constitution. Whatever other causes may have contributed to the depression of the one community and the elevation of the other, whatever corrupting or paralyzing influence may have been exerted in the former case, by a wretched and degrading superstition connected with a course of restrictive, and in times that are past at least, not very

pure administration, there can be no doubt that the system of universal education, which has so long been prevalent in Scotland, and the spirit of intelligence, reflection, and inquiry, which it has been the means of diffusing, is one very principal ground of the decided advantage in point of civilization, comfort, and moral refinement, which the great body of its population possesses over that of the sister island. So early, in the progress of its civil history, did the cultivation of literature gain a footing in Scotland, that it was said by one of its eminent writers, that there they had learnt to compose Latin verses before they could make a wheelbarrow. The fruit of this timely devotedness and persevering attachment to the cause of useful knowledge, is manifest in the masculine sense—the sound wisdom—and the very superior habits of morality, decency and propriety, which are almost universally allowed to mark the generality of the inhabitants of that country.

When the character has thus been softened into humanity, imbued with the refining elements of social kindness and affection, and defecated from the grosser impurities of unreclaimed nature, it is prepared for the influence of another most important circumstance arising from the cultivation of science, with a view to the melioration or maintenance of the *moral* habit,—that it teaches most effectually the *value and proper use of time*. We know of no more fertile source of crime—of no corrupt fountain, which wells out a more copious stream of vice and moral pollution, in all its forms and modifications, than *idleness*. We are persuaded that it is the parent of a more nume-

rous progeny of depraved habits and delinquencies, than any other single circumstance whatever. It is the want of a due impression of the importance and legitimate employment of time, which is one of the main occasions of the luxury and profligacy of one order of society; and it is the same cause which vitiates and defiles the manners of another, and a subordinate rank in the scale. It is inquired by an ancient poet, who was a keen and accurate observer of human character, why Ægisthus so grievously and wantonly deviated from the path of virtue, and he immediately subjoins the reply—"The cause is obvious—he was idle\*." And it is a circumstance worthy of remark, that when Hogarth, who is so celebrated for his striking delineations of human life and manners, wished to give a portraiture of a veteran criminal, he made him commence his career as a boy lolling on the tomb-stones of the church-yard on the Sunday.

In no scene of life, perhaps, is the malignant influence of time, not being duly appreciated, upon the habits of the general conduct, more strikingly apparent, than among the congregated mass of the students, or rather residents of a university. It is a notorious and unquestionable fact, that amidst this promiscuous assemblage the men of incorrect morals are those who are strangers to the pleasure, and imagine themselves to be exempt from the necessity, of a close and vigorous attention to their studies. And nothing has more effectually contributed to the elevation of the moral and religious standard in our great

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\* Quæritur Ægisthus qua re sit factus adulter?  
In promptu causa est, desidiosus erat.

seminaries of learning, than those habits of generous competition and active, unwearied industry in the pursuit of scientific attainment, which now so generally prevail in them. Throughout the various gradations of the nobility and gentry of the land, among whom amusements, not always of the most unexceptionable kind, are considered as the great business of life, the want of some intellectual engagement to cover the vacant spaces of unoccupied hours, is grievously felt in its deteriorating effects upon the character. Among the lower classes of society, the dangers attendant on a spirit of indolence are still greater, and the benefits resulting from the means of effectual security against them are proportionably important. That a taste for literary and scientific pursuits has a powerful tendency to ward off these evils, and to realize the opposite advantages, requires, I conceive, but little discrimination to perceive, and little force of argumentation to demonstrate.

It is perfectly obvious that those who are engaged in the most laborious undertakings, who are employed in those departments of industry which require the most assiduous and incessant attention, will have some time at command. Every business or profession has in a degree, more or less, its seasons of leisure and relaxation. And even when the hours of the day are engrossed entirely by necessary duties, as in some instances they doubtless are, it is at least, in very few cases, that a small portion of disposable time may not be innocently stolen from the hours legitimately and fairly devoted to repose. It is also to be observed, that there are few professions, or spe-

cific modes of applying labour and skill, which are capable of being prosecuted at all times and in all seasons of the year. There will, moreover, occur, though not very frequently, in the case of an industrious and active individual, but there will occasionally occur seasons in which persons of the class to which I am now referring, will be destitute of full and regular employment, and of necessity have a considerable quantity of time on their hands.

Now the question is, who is likely to convert these seasons of leisure and of exemption from the demands of active duty to the best account? The man whose mind is a perfect blank with respect to every idea beyond the range of his physical occupations and propensities, or the man whose mind is a mirror of intelligence, reflecting the fair and beautiful ideas of creation in their diversified forms of combination throughout the extensive provinces of material and animated existence. The former, it is evident, the moment he breaks loose from the shackles of necessary labour, or is shaken off as a useless weight from the machinery of active employment, will be eager to plunge into some scene of boisterous and exciting enjoyment, or, perhaps, he will sink into a state of insipid and degrading indolence—an insupportable burden to himself—a nuisance to society, and ready to fall into any snare of temptation, and to become a prey to every corrupting association. In every scene of debauchery and excess, so far as his means extend, and much beyond his legitimate resources, he is likely to be foremost. Depraved himself, and depraving others by his influence and example, it is



difficult to know where his career may end. Idleness and ignorance having betrayed him into profligacy, it is well if his profligacy does not lead him into some outrage upon the rights and privileges of the community, which will result in punishment and disgrace. We should be sorry to be supposed to bring a general charge of this nature against every person of ignorant and uncultivated mind. We are perfectly aware, that in many cases there is much of good feeling, where the range of ideas is very narrow and confined; and there are few specimens of character, which it is more delightful to contemplate than this noble triumph of involuntary intellectual poverty over all the disadvantages of its condition. But we are here endeavouring to state what is the natural tendency, and what, in very many instances, proves to be the actual effect of grovelling and unthinking ignorance in the absence of a better principle.

Compare with this tendency and effect what is likely to be the conduct of the latter individual that has been mentioned—the man to whose mind science has just begun to open its treasures, in his seasons of leisure from his regular duties. If he be imbued with the genuine spirit of literary and philosophical research, he will be anxious to avail himself of every opportunity, which legitimately intervenes amidst the pursuits in which he may be professedly employed, to cultivate the soil of his own mind. He will be desirous of being disengaged from the trammels of his proper vocation, not for the purpose of indulging in sloth, and much less with the eagerness of one who wishes to rush into scenes of riot and intemperance,



but with a view of engaging in the more undisturbed exercise of his own faculties—with the calm delight, but not the morbid impatience, of enjoying an intellectual feast as soon as the just requirements of duty and necessity have been fully and adequately met. Such a person will feel that he cannot *afford* to waste away his time, to squander his best resources in the extravagance of idleness and folly. The very consideration, that he has but little, will make him habitually more solicitous that he may lose none. And thus his hours will be divided between the indispensable duties of his rank and situation in life, and the cultivation of those habits of mind and character which become a rational and accountable being—it being perfectly understood and taken for granted in this view of his conduct, that the most important of all interests, so far from being neglected, receives its appropriate and a very primary share of attention.

I do not think it very easy to over-rate the moral importance of these unoccupied intervals of time, which continually occur in the life of the most diligent and fully employed. They appear to me to be above all other seasons the inlets of corruption; and, therefore, it is of the utmost consequence to guard and secure them by some salutary engagement. They seem to be so many sluices, which, unless duly closed, are in danger of admitting a torrent of evil habits; but when properly filled up, they constitute a species of artificial dykes, by which the overflowings of vice and iniquity are effectually restrained.

In taking a survey of the nature of man and the principles by which he is governed, it is impossible

not to perceive that a desire of happiness occupies a very commanding and influential position in his character. On this ground it is evident, that whatever is calculated to meet this powerful and prevailing tendency, will modify every faculty and affection of the mind, and give a predominant and specific direction to the whole course of the conduct. It may, therefore, be regarded as another very decisive proof of the moral and beneficial influence of science upon the character, that *it opens new sources of pleasure*. Such is the craving eagerness of man for enjoyment, that unless he can obtain it within the legitimate bounds of morality and virtue, he will seldom scruple, except he is restrained by a higher principle of religion, to transgress those limits, so far as is not absolutely inconsistent with the legal and civil institutions of the land.

Very frequently, indeed, he is instigated by passion, hurried by some precipitate impulse, or led by a cool and deliberate calculation of some unlawful advantage or gratification, to the gross and outrageous violation of those salutary principles. But if prudence and other subordinate considerations of safety and interest should be effectual in keeping him within the just boundaries prescribed by the laws of the state, if his habits should not absolutely degenerate into crimes impeachable at the bar of the public magistrate, there will be still abundant scope for the practice of every vice, and for the pursuit of pleasure in every form of depravity, and through every channel of sensual indulgence. If he is a stranger to a purer, sublimer, and more intel-



lectual range of enjoyments, he will be urged by a native tendency, operating in him with the force of a species of moral necessity, but a necessity, which neutralizes none of his guilt, to slake his thirst after happiness from some more turbid source. According to the extent of his means and the peculiar bias of his constitutional temperament, he will either indulge in the excesses of prodigality and unrestrained libertinism, or in the pursuit of those meaner and more grovelling gratifications, which every one has it in his power to command. Impatient of the insipidity of the same dull round of employments, of the torpor of unexercised faculties, and of the insupportable weight of unoccupied time, he will, perhaps, plunge into the vortex of dissipating amusements, where vice meets him in every seductive form, and where the atmosphere is contaminated with principles fatal to the best interests of virtue; or he may frequent those resorts of intoxication and excess, where the orgies of nocturnal revelry are celebrated, and where the votaries of vice meet together as for the express purpose of performing the last obsequies of morality.

But let the ennobling and elevating spirit of science once deeply imbue his mind, and I will venture to affirm that, at least, a very powerful if not completely influential counteracting principle will become incorporated into his character. Let knowledge unfold its resources, and literature display its inexhaustible treasures before him. Let the Mechanical Arts no longer remain mechanical, but, by the discovery of their astonishing forces and capabi-

lities of application, become mental and intellectual employments in his hands. Let Mathematics, in their abstruse and more remote combinations of quantity, and in their practical adaptation to the various uses of life, employ the acuter and more investigating faculties of his mind. Let Chemistry, containing the universal law of matter in every form of composition and analysis, teach him to look with a scientific eye to every object with which he is surrounded. Let Astronomy reveal her stupendous wonders to his view, and engage his mind in the contemplation of her brilliant phenomena. Let History unroll her records, and cause to pass before him in review the diversified scenery of ages and generations past, presenting in more prominent exhibition those striking epochs which have exerted an extensive and lasting influence upon the destinies of mankind. Let Poetry, chaste, pure, and sublime, enchant him with the magic of her charms, and soothe him with the melody of her voice, tinging every scene with colours of a brighter hue, and arraying the face of nature with beauties not her own. Let his various faculties be thus directed towards their appropriate objects, and flow forth in their respective channels of enjoyment, and I do not assert, indeed, that he will be everything that he may and ought to be, but it may be safely affirmed, that he will have in himself such resources—that he will, at all times, have at command such diversified means of refined and exquisite enjoyment, as will be sufficient to preserve him from any imaginary necessity of recurring to pleasures of a debasing or questionable character.

To point out all the avenues, by which the pursuits of literature and science conduct to the sources of intellectual gratification, would far exceed my present limits. To the man of taste and imagination, or of patient research, there is an indefinable pleasure in the conscious exercise of his faculties, and in satiating his appetite for knowledge out of the exhaustless stores which lie before him. In whatever department of labour, or art, he may be engaged, he will throw a portion of mind into every undertaking, and sublimate with this ethereal spirit the coarsest elements with which he comes in contact. In the pursuit of knowledge, he will doubtless be frequently humiliated at the thought of the comparative scantiness of his acquirements; he will have to encounter many difficulties in his way. In the abstract sciences he will more particularly have to engage in these trials of intellectual dexterity and strength. Few obstacles, however, will meet him, over which labour and perseverance will not triumph; and, independently of the joy of victory, there is pleasure in the very effort, in the vigorous attempt to master what hitherto has baffled his endeavours\*. And though, in his upward progress along the acclivities of that mountain, whose summit is lost in the clouds, he will still find

Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps o'er Alps arise;  
yet it is not without satisfaction that he occasionally looks downward, and marks the impediments which

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\* *Ἡδεῖα δ' ἐστὶ τοῦ μὲν παρόντος ἡ ἐνεργεία, τοῦ δὲ μέλλοντος ἡ ἐλπίς, τοῦ δὲ γεγεννημένου ἡ μνήμη· ἡδίστον δὲ τὸ κατὰ τὴν ἐνεργείαν.*—ARISTOT. *Eth. Nic.*, ix. 7.

he has already surmounted, the heights which he has already scaled. It is said of Pythagoras, that he sacrificed a hecatomb in token of his exulting gratitude for the discovery of an important problem contained in the elements of Euclid. It is related of another philosopher of antiquity, the renowned Archimedes, that such was the delight which he enjoyed in his sublime speculations, that he regarded the practical uses of his astonishing mechanical inventions as altogether a subordinate consideration, and exhibited them only for amusement. So completely absorbed was the mind of this wonderful man in his geometrical calculations, that, when a Roman soldier was on the point of plunging his sword into his body, he requested him to withhold the fatal stroke until he had finished the problem, which he was engaged in demonstrating. And how great and exquisite, as Dugald Stewart justly remarks, must have been the pleasure experienced by the celebrated mathematician and astronomer, La Grange, on having proved, upon principles of sublime and complicated science, that the present system has not, as by some had been imagined, the elements of necessary destruction in itself. The same remark is applicable to those eminent persons who have distinguished themselves by their inventions and discoveries in other branches of knowledge and art. And though it would be extravagant to compare with these every humble votary who carries his offering to the altar of science\*, yet the pleasure of success, though in a subordinate and

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\* *Quisquis adhuc uno partem colit asse Minervam.*—Juv.

less splendid career, is as real, and, perhaps, as vivid in his case, as with those who are most powerfully efficient in extending the empire of knowledge.

Science, by opening the sources of refined and varied pleasure, renders him who pursues it, in a great measure, *independent of the senses*, which discloses another very important modification of moral influence. It is remarked by Addison, that the pleasures of taste and imagination occupy a middle place between those of pure intellect and science, and the pleasures of sense. And where there is a capacity for enjoying both or either of the former, it may be fairly assumed, that the latter will be in a considerable measure superseded. In the mixed and compound nature of man, there is an incessant contest between discordant elements and varying inclinations, until the intellectual principle, or the animal propensity, gains a decisive and almost complete predominance; and the general tenor of the conduct will take its direction according to the superior and preponderating influence, which these constituents of character are respectively found to exert. Let a man be supposed to be altogether destitute of any relish for the pure gratifications of mind in its diversified modes of exercise and application, and by an almost unavoidable proclivity of nature, he will sink into the mire of sensuality, where he will be held fast in the chains of some sordid pursuit or affection. But deprive him of his usual indulgences; dry up, or divert from their wonted and accessible channels the polluted streams, from which he has been accustomed

to drink—let him be incapacitated by age or infirmity, or any other uncontrollable circumstance, to pursue his former habits, and satiate himself with the same intoxicating draught, and, unless he is supplied with resources of cheerfulness and consolation, springing from a principle still nobler and better than science itself, he will of necessity be plunged into a state of sour melancholy and vacant wretchedness.

But the man, who, like the ancient philosopher, carries with him his riches in his mind, and the chief portion of his happiness, so far as it is connected with the affairs of the present world, in the exercise of his faculties, rises to a great degree superior to those privations or vicissitudes, or those superabundant and diversified opportunities of indulgence, which affect the enjoyment of the senses. If he is destitute of the means, he feels not the necessity, except so far as the moderate supply of his physical wants. He can expatiate in the liberty of thought, amidst the confinement of the closest and most binding employment; he can luxuriate amidst scenes of intellectual affluence and delight, while surrounded on every hand with the insignia of contracted resources. If, on the contrary, his circumstances be ample, and the sources of sensitive gratification be freely at his command, even though he should be destitute of a sublimer and more unexceptionable principle, a sense of the dignity of his nature, and an elegance of feeling and taste springing from the habitual contemplation of the abstract and ideal beauty of moral excellence will in general effectually



preserve him from suffering the rational part of his being to become entirely amalgamated with the animal. He will assert the freedom of his mind against every attempt of the senses to bring him into bondage, and with the consciousness of his heavenly origin and immortal destiny, purified, it may be hoped, from the pride and self-complacence, which in the case of the Roman philosopher it too clearly embodied, he will exclaim with Seneca, "I was born for higher things than to be the slave of my body." And if this independence of the mind over the propensities and allurements of the senses be effectually maintained, the fortress of morality and virtue will be considerably strengthened, and some of the broadest avenues will be closed, through which vice makes her inroads into the character. On a most superficial view of society, it is impossible not to observe, that a large portion of the various gradations of vice and misery, by which unhappily it is too generally characterized, arise from improvidence and inconsiderateness, from the want of a deliberate and due calculation of remote consequences and effects. It is this combination of defects which opens the door for so many positive evils and delinquencies, from which otherwise the character would have been exempt. Men, whose minds have not been enlightened by knowledge, and whose understandings have not been trained to habits of patient and comprehensive thought, are apt to be led away by present appearances, and to be urged by momentary impulses. Their views are too narrow to survey an object in all its circumstances and

relations—too short to follow the obvious tendencies of an action to its distant and eventual results. They are not accustomed to look beyond the sphere of actual and sensitive vision—they know not what it is to weigh the probabilities of a question in the scales of an impartial and deliberate judgment. They have not sagacity to penetrate beneath the surface of things. With them whatever is specious and imposing carries conviction—whatever promises immediate gratification is substantial good—whatever glitters *is* gold. Hence their character lies at the mercy of surrounding influences and adventitious circumstances. To them a strong temptation is almost a certain fall. To this thoughtless and uncalculating habit, is owing half the vice and attendant wretchedness, which prey upon so large a portion of mankind.

But let the mind be expanded by suitable exercise, and the understanding be disciplined in the school of sober reflection—let such a moderate degree of insight into the present character, and of foresight into the future consequences of things, be acquired, as is not incompatible with the unavoidable ignorance and fallibility of human nature, and many of the most grievous moral maladies of individuals, as well as of society, will be cured in the removal of their causes. As *individuals*, men will no longer allow themselves to be hurried headlong by passion, or allured by corrupt communication, into acts of dishonesty, profligacy, or intemperance, which, in their consequences, must of necessity entail poverty, misery, or disgrace, upon themselves and their fa-



milies. They will look before they resolve—they will pause before they act. In their *social* and *civil* capacity, they will possess equal advantages. They will take a clear, dispassionate and enlightened view of their duties and obligations, as well as of their privileges, as members of a free, but not lawless government; nor will they be easily persuaded to forego the certain blessings of safety and civil protection which they enjoy, for the doubtful and perilous advantages, which would result from violence and insubordination. Knowing the value of their own rights, they have learnt to respect the rights of others. If they have too much knowledge to be deluded into the approbation of oppressive and arbitrary decrees, they have also too much wisdom to be precipitated by a rash and headlong spirit of innovation, into the gulf of anarchy and confusion.

On this question, which I consider as a legitimate and very important branch of social morality, it is remarked by Professor Stewart, whom no one will suspect of being an enemy to the rights and liberties of mankind, that one great benefit resulting from the general diffusion of light and knowledge throughout the community is, that men are thereby rendered less liable to be led away by the artifices of public orators and popular demagogues, and that the inevitable effect of such a dissemination of sound principles among the mass of the people, is to lessen the dangerous and injurious influence of these persons. The same enlightened philosopher and laborious investigator of the principles of the human mind, has observed that it is only upon ignorant minds—upon

minds unaccustomed to the exercise of their faculties, and incapable of a cool and deliberate application of their reasoning powers, that inflammatory declamations, addressed to the imagination, can produce their effect. With him agrees the late moderate and excellent Dr. Paley, who remarks that, although in a state of peace and public tranquillity, and when all external circumstances contribute to the maintenance of regularity and quietness of conduct, ignorance may afford a colour of security to the interests of the community, and by its pliability of movement, may seem to be conducive to the harmony of the system; yet in those seasons of difficulty and depression, by which, from whatever causes they may arise, the history of states is so frequently chequered, when the political horizon is darkened with clouds, and seems fraught with the elements of destruction, in such an order of things it is in the knowledge and sound discretion of the great body of the people that the safety of a nation is centred. And I am persuaded, that most of those dreadful convulsions, which at different periods have deluged countries with blood—those frantic ebullitions of barbarity and crime, which are at once the terror and disgrace of our nature, are mainly to be attributed, not to popular knowledge and philosophy, as they have sometimes been erroneously traced, but to the want of this enlightened wisdom in those, who must always constitute the physical and disposable energy of a kingdom. So far as they were ascribable to knowledge at all, they were the effects of the perverted knowledge of a few operating upon the ignorance of the many. They

were, in fact, the fire and smoke, and pestilential exhalations, arising from the political laboratory of those who experimented upon the elements of ignorance and passion as their subjects\*.

The last modification of moral influence which we shall now be able to notice, as belonging to science, is the favourable aspect which it bears, when properly cultivated, to the interests of religion, as the grand

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\* As illustrative of the natural influence of the pursuits of science, and of the general expansion of mind upon the political condition of society, it gives me great pleasure to strengthen the preceding remarks, by the following passage from a luminous and eloquent speech of a distinguished member of the British Parliament, delivered on opening the Budget, March 15, 1826:—"There are, indeed, some persons who think this diffusion of knowledge the misfortune of the age; but I know not how those minds can be constituted, who look upon knowledge with an eye of fear. On me, it produces an impression diametrically the reverse. I am convinced—most thoroughly convinced, that the more people are instructed in all that is essential to their good, the more likely they are to see what that good is, and the ends by which it is to be attained; the more likely they are to abstain from the use of means in their operation prejudicial to the strength of a country; since all mankind, nay, I was going to use that despised word, philosophers, are agreed, that—'Knowledge is power.'"

In fact, the only danger to a state, arising from the dissemination of sound knowledge, must be owing to the absence of that principle in the administration of its affairs, which alone can secure the homage of a well-instructed mind—an equitable and enlightened discharge of its legislative and authoritative functions. This is the *condition*, upon which every well-constituted government expects, and may with safety calculate upon, the veneration and cheerful obedience of its subjects; and, in this view of the case, I see nothing to be apprehended from the following unquestionable statement of Cicero—"Huic veri videndi cupiditati adjuncta est appetitio quædam principatus, ut nemini parere animus bene a natura informatus velit, nisi præcipienti aut docenti, aut utilitatis causa *juste et legitime imperanti*."—De Offic., lib. i. cap. 4.

foundation of morality. We hope that the time is now gone by, when ignorance was regarded as the mother of piety—when it was deemed necessary for the maintenance of the cause of truth, that the Scriptures themselves should be kept

Bound in the fetters of an unknown tongue,  
and confined within the massive walls of churches,  
and cloistered monasteries; lest, clad in the garb of plainness and simplicity, and speaking the vulgar dialect, they should go abroad among the people, and excite in them a spirit of needless and inexpedient inquiry. The palpable gloom of this Egyptian night was dissipated by the morning star of the Reformation, which heralded the approaching and more general diffusion of the light of revealed truth. And I cannot but regard it as a circumstance honourable to literature, as connected with the interests of religion, that as one of the subordinate causes, in the hands of a superintending Providence, it was mainly instrumental in effecting the emancipation of a large portion of the Christian world from the bondage of Popish superstition. It will be acknowledged, I conceive, by all who are acquainted with history, that the destruction of the Eastern Empire, and the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, had the effect of transferring the seat of classical and theological learning from Asia into Europe; and that the revival of letters consequent upon that change, proved the happy occasion, in connexion with other causes, of opening the eyes of the early champions of the Reformation to the absurd and impious dogmas of the Romish Church. It was this which, in subordination to a higher influence, en-

lightened the minds and roused the spirits of Luther, the foremost among a band of worthies—of Melancthon, and I may add, of Erasmus, notwithstanding his pitiable duplicity, and vacillating timidity of character—it was this which, in a great measure, prepared and qualified them for laying bare, and for demolishing, to a considerable extent, that enormous mass of ignorance and superstition which had accumulated over the site of the Christian Church, as the muddy stream of time gradually lodged its deposits.

An apprehension has been felt, indeed, by well-disposed individuals, in almost every age of the church—an apprehension, which I by no means regard as utterly destitute of all foundation, that philosophy and secular literature, owing to the general habit and bias of the human mind, are calculated rather to be injurious than favourable to the real interests of religious truth.

Under the influence of this feeling, the celebrated Gregory, Bishop of Rome, wished to destroy all the literary remains of heathen antiquity, and prohibited the use of them in those seminaries of Christian education, which were subject to his control. But in this, as Lord Bacon, in his *Treatise on the Advancement of the Sciences*, justly remarks, he is seldom thought by the most enlightened part of the world to have acted wisely. And with a view of supplying the defect, several of the fathers of the church attempted to compose pieces in prose and verse upon the plan of the ancient models. The great restorer of learning, or rather founder of modern science, acknowledges, indeed, that a slight and superficial

survey of the world of knowledge, may, in some instances, be productive of a species of vertiginous and intoxicating effect, and give the mind an atheistic and irreligious tendency. But a clearer insight into the mysteries of nature, and a richer infusion of the genuine spirit of philosophy, he affirms, never fail to bring it back again into a sober and wholesome frame\*. It is also unquestionable, that subsequently to his time, science and literature, in most of their ordinary departments, have frequently dishonoured their names, and compromised their character, by becoming allied, and, as it were, amalgamated with a spirit of impiety and infidelity. The nobler and more transcendent efforts of human genius, however, have soared above this polluted atmosphere. The great representatives of the various provinces of the human mind, the most honourable functionaries in the intellectual republic, they who have been most successful in extending its territories, and have erected the standard of knowledge in regions hitherto unexplored, have not soiled their garments with this base refuse. While we have our Bacons—our Newtons—our Lockes—our Miltons—our Pascals, and

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\* It is remarkable, that the truth of this representation is distinctly recognized by Hume himself, who remarks, "that men being taught by superstition to lay the stress on a wrong place, when that fails them, and they discover, by a little reflection, that the course of nature is regular and uniform, their whole faith totters and falls to ruins. But being taught by more reflection, that this very regularity and uniformity is the strongest proof of a design and of a supreme Intelligence, they return to that belief which they had deserted, and they are now able to establish it upon a firmer and more durable foundation."



other scarce inferior names, associated with a firm belief in the doctrines of revelation—many of them zealous defenders of its vital truths, we need be under no apprehension that the spirit of infidelity should ever with justice be identified with the spirit of philosophy.

— Philosophy baptized

In the pure fountain of eternal love,  
Has eyes indeed; and viewing all she sees,  
As meant to indicate a God to man,  
Gives him his praise, and forfeits not her own.  
Learning has borne such fruit in other days,  
On all her branches; piety has found  
Friends in the friends of Science, and true prayer  
Has flowed from lips wet with Castalian dews.  
Such was thy wisdom, Newton, child-like sage!  
Sagacious reader of the works of God,  
And in his word sagacious. Such, too, thine,  
Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,  
And fed on manna. And such, thine in whom  
Our British Themis gloried with just cause,  
Immortal Hale, for deep discernment praised,  
And sound integrity, not more than famed  
For sanctity of manners undefiled.

It is, indeed, only while Science confines herself to her suitable office of being an *handmaid* to religion, and through the gradation of the exquisite arrangement of subordinate and secondary causes, conducts the mind to the admiration and acknowledgment of the great *first Cause*—that she is entitled to countenance and respect. It is her business, if we may venture to apply a heathen illustration, to lead the inquirer through that beautiful range of harmonious and mutually dependent operations, which pervade the economy of the universe, until he has found that the last link in nature's

chain is fastened to the foot of Jupiter's chair. And the moment she forgets this, her appropriate province, by prying into scenes which are of necessity concealed from her view, and by invalidating truths, the evidence of which she is not qualified to appreciate, instead of being an angel of light, she becomes at once emphatically a minister of darkness.

That this, however, should be generally or extensively the case, is by no means to be apprehended. That it should ever take place is only one of those instances of unnatural perversion and abuse, to which every excellency and advantage are liable, when they become associated with corrupt principles, and is in reality no more an argument against it, than (as Aristotle has truly remarked in reply to a similar objection against the art of Rhetoric) it is an argument against the value of health or physical strength that it is capable of being misapplied\*. It is true, that there is a vain philosophy—a science falsely so called, against which an apostle cautions the community to which he is writing; but the true and sober, and well directed knowledge of nature cannot be included in that designation; and from a variety of other declarations and examples, we have abundant reason to conclude, that this latter form of “divine philosophy” has nothing in it inconsistent, but on the

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\* Εἰ οτι μεγάλα βλαφεῖεν ἂν ὁ χρωμένος τῇ τοιαυτῇ δυνάμει τῶν λογῶν, τοῦτο τε κοινὸν ἐστὶ κατὰ πάντων ἀγαθῶν πλὴν ἀρετῆς, καὶ μάλιστα κατὰ τῶν χρησιμωτάτων, οἷον ἰσχύος, υγείας, πλούτου, στρατηγίας. Τοιούτοις γὰρ ἂν τις ὠφεληθεῖε τὰ μέγιστα χρωμένος δικαίως, καὶ βλαφεῖεν, ἠδικῶς.—De Rhet. lib. i. cap. i.



other hand is perfectly congenial, with a spirit of the devoutest piety.

The interests of morality and religion, though not identical, are inseparably connected together. Whatever is calculated to promote and secure the one, must exert a favourable influence with respect to the other. It is dangerous, and injurious in the extreme, to rest in science or morality as an end. Assuredly they do not, either separately or combined, constitute the chief good of man, nor of themselves can they raise him to that perfection, of which his nature is capable; but they may be eminently conducive to that end. The order of relation in which they appear to stand is, that science, duly and soberly cultivated, leads to morality, and morality, as an intermediate stage, conducts into the confines of religion, and religion as the transforming and perfecting economy of the character of man, brings him by an immediate and direct path to the completion of his hopes, and the consummation of his felicity. Morality is the outer court of the temple, of which religion is the sanctuary. In order to enter the latter, it is indispensable to pass through the former. Or, to adopt an illustration from the technical phraseology of Logic, religion, as the major proposition, includes morality as the minor, though the converse of this proposition is by no means necessarily true. If science, therefore, as we have now endeavoured to show, be in its general tendency favourable to the interests of religion, it must by implication be conducive to the interests of morality.

We now proceed to notice some of the dangers

which may incidentally arise from the pursuits of science, and to suggest such cautions and correctives, as appear calculated most effectually to secure success in the prosecution of knowledge, and, therewith associated, those beneficial results of a moral and social nature which have been already specified. Much, however, of this part of the discussion has been already anticipated, and interwoven with the former portion of this inquiry. In reference to these points, therefore, a few brief hints alone are necessary. In the endeavour to acquire useful knowledge, it is of great importance that we do not suffer ourselves to be bewildered by attempting too many things at once, or by neglecting those gradations in the scale of intellect, without a due regard to which, it is impossible to arrive at the higher departments. It is the rule of epic poetry, as exemplified by the Grecian bard, and enforced by the Roman critic, to plunge at once into the midst of the scene\*, and to interweave whatever is necessary to the due comprehension of the subject, with the structure of the work, by a skilful arrangement of episodes and interlocutions. But the rule of scientific acquirement is the very reverse. Here we must begin *ab ovo*—with first principles, and lay the foundation of the edifice in a clear and comprehensive acquaintance with elementary facts. And when this has been in some degree secured, it requires no ordinary measure of resolution and self-denial, to fix and concentrate the attention

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\* ————— in medias res

Non secus ac notas auditorem rapit.

in that peculiar branch of knowledge which promises most usefulness and success. It is, doubtless, a mortifying consideration, that we cannot know everything which is fairly within the reach of the human faculties—that we cannot make a complete and accurate tour through the whole circle of the sciences; but it is what has never yet been effected by man. A respectable and adequate proportion of general knowledge, a share of information upon every subject of importance, sufficient for the purposes of illustration and intellectual expansion, is certainly attainable; but to aspire after universality is assuredly to covet forbidden fruit. One of the most eminent mathematicians of modern times acknowledges, that the science of quantity alone, in its higher and more complicated departments, has ramified into too great a variety of forms and methods of investigation, to be adequately pursued and appreciated by one mind\*. How completely out of the question is it, therefore, that an individual, however eminently endowed, and however favourably circumstanced, should comprehend within the sphere of his distinct and penetrating vision the whole domain of human knowledge. Against such an illimitable enlargement of the range of the intellectual faculties, the eternal law of our constitution hath raised an insurmountable barrier; and it may without hesitation be affirmed, that the profoundest philosopher or the

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\* Vide DOUGLAS'S *Advancement of Society in Knowledge and Religion*—a work, notwithstanding some questionable positions, distinguished by a vigour of intellect, and an extensiveness of research seldom equalled.

most accomplished scholar that ever lived, knew no more than the *alphabet of universal knowledge*. It is no less a true than it is a pleasing estimate, which the greatest discoverer of modern times formed of his own character and attainments, the man, of whom it was said aptly, though extravagantly, indeed—

Nature and nature's works lay hid in night,  
God said—Let Newton be, and all was light,

when he represents himself as a child walking upon the shore, and gathering pebbles, wherewith to amuse himself, while the great ocean of truth lay before him, in its wide and measureless expanse, untraversed, and for the most part unperceived. In the earlier stages of literary attainment, before the mind is yet fully acquainted with its own powers, the danger of this presumption is greater. When science and imagination first begin to unfold their treasures to an individual possessed of a considerable aptitude of acquirement, naturally fond of knowledge, and enthusiastic in his admiration of everything that is elegant and sublime, he is like one who enters a room splendidly illuminated. He is for a while dazzled with the profusion of lights, and with the beautiful variety of the prismatic colours; and it is some time before he can apply his mind to the objects most worthy of his attention. Such, indeed, is the case with most persons in the earlier stages of their intellectual cultivation; and it is of the utmost importance to their real improvement that they reduce their expectations and confine their researches to those sober limits which are obviously within their reach. The great

secret of doing much, said Locke, than whom no one could be a better judge, is to do one thing at a time. It was a due regard to this principle—a patient and concentrated application of the faculties to one principal branch of investigation, which enabled him to complete his own immortal work, and was mainly conducive to the erection of the majestic edifice of the philosophy of Newton.

With a view to the moral influence of scientific pursuits, and to the prevention of those evils which they may be incidentally liable to produce, we should lay it down as a fundamental principle, never to allow our love of knowledge, however laudable and intense, materially to interfere with our proper duties, whether they be those primary obligations which we owe to the great Author of our being, or those which subordinately arise from our several relations in life, or our rank in society. Most men of literary habits, who are shackled by other engagements, and great demands upon their time, (and few there are, beyond the period of their pupilage, wholly exempt from such requisitions,) have felt the danger and inconvenience of this excessive indulgence. Generally, indeed, prudence, and a commanding sense of obligation, in many instances absolute and unavoidable necessity, operates as a sufficient guard against this evil. Wherever the love of knowledge is so powerfully predominant, as in some cases it is found, and the legitimate opportunities of acquiring it comparatively few and rare, it must be confessed that there is no slight danger of withholding from less intellectual pursuits and

avocations that undivided attention which they demand—of curtailing the time, which they require—of thus violating the principles of prudential and domestic interests, and even of encroaching upon the sacredness of seasons, and duties of still deeper solemnity. The maxim of Bishop Sanderson should be inscribed in prominent and legible characters upon the closet door of every student, "*Bene orasse est bene studuisse.*" It certainly cannot be denied, and it is greatly to be lamented, that a disposition to cultivate science in its various departments, independently of all connexion with religion, is very widely and alarmingly prevalent in the present day. In some of our great seats of learning, and more especially in those which have recently sprung up, there is by no means that prominent and practical recognition of the importance of religion as a personal concern, and as essentially entering into the system of education suited to an immortal being which its nature so justly demands. There is a spirit gone abroad among certain classes of illuminati, which occasionally vents itself in very extravagant terms, as descriptive of that era of light and glory which the diffusion of intellect, by its own sovereign and exclusive agency, is expected to usher in upon the world. It is possible to carry this notion of the unaided efficiency of knowledge and mental cultivation to an extent that will prove not only false, but also, in the highest degree, prejudicial and injurious. There is a danger, lest the young aspirant after academical or literary distinction should forget that there are other duties to perform than the mere im-



provement of his own mind—than the mere expansion and invigoration of his own intellectual faculties; and that the hour which he employs in the sublime occupations of prayer and retired meditation, so far from being wasted, as he may sometimes be tempted to think, is the hour of all others most usefully and legitimately spent. In order, therefore, that science may be religiously, morally, and socially beneficial, it should be laid down as a principle, as firm and immovable as any of the axioms upon which it rests, that the pursuits of knowledge, however delightful in themselves, must never interrupt the regular course of the relative and subordinate duties of life, and still less of those primary duties which man owes to his Maker. But when these claims have been fully, honestly, and conscientiously met, science may lawfully come in for the surplus of time which remains, and cannot be prosecuted with an ardour too devoted and enthusiastic.

Still viewing the subject under the same aspect, it is an essential element in the constitution of a well-regulated mind, and therefore of a well-ordered frame of character, to guard against the remotest tendency towards a contemptuous feeling with respect to those, who may be necessarily destitute of that comparative measure of literary and scientific endowment, which the individual himself may possess. Independently of the irresistible testimony of observation and experience, we have the express declaration of an apostle, that at a certain stage of the character, and, for the most part, at the earlier periods of intellectual growth, before the habits of a



sound judgment and mature reflection are formed, "Knowledge puffeth up." It is mainly in this point of view, that the celebrated couplet of Pope, which, with many persons, carries an authority so unquestionable and commanding, and is so frequently in the mouth of those who are hostile to the general progress of knowledge, admits at all of a fair and legitimate application—

A little learning is a dangerous thing,  
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.

There is something in the elevation of genius—in the dignity of science, the remotest affinity to which, like the pride of ancestry, is apt to swell the mind with a sense of imaginary and undue importance. And he who has made the slightest advancement towards this fancied eminence, is sometimes tempted to think that he has a right to despise those, who, either from defects of nature, or a less auspicious order of circumstances, have been left behind in the vale of ignorance; or to view with emotions, not altogether foreign to envy and morbid dissatisfaction, those who, perhaps, with inferior intellectual pretensions, have been able by other means more rapidly to ascend the gradations of honour, distinction, and emolument. While I would be the last to derogate from the intrinsic excellency of mental endowment — from its unquestionable and decided superiority over every external and adventitious appendage of the human character, I must maintain, at the same time, that it can no more justify a contempt of comparative and unavoidable ignorance in any rank of life, than the power of the great, or the

wealth of the affluent, can justify a similar feeling in their possessors towards those who are debarred from these more doubtful advantages. A calm and sober estimate of science in any of its gradations and departments, as an ingredient of character, and as forming a claim to any sudden and extraordinary elevation in life, is an indispensable requisite to that purifying and meliorating influence, which it is calculated to exert upon society.

Happily the temptation to intellectual and literary pride, the moment it is in danger of becoming general, carries with it its own corrective. Let knowledge be extensively disseminated — let the whole mass of the people be elevated to the utmost of their native capabilities in the scale of intellect, and the possession of a moderate portion of literary taste and scientific information will cease to be an object of distinction. Let it cease to be an object of distinction, and the danger of undue self-complacency upon the ground of ordinary attainments will, of necessity, disappear; and the mass of general knowledge, thus acquired, will mingle as a valuable accession with the principles of common sense. Let there be a simultaneous movement towards the higher regions of intellect in the several ranks and orders of society, without any attempt to disturb the salutary economy of nature, and to set at nought the collective wisdom of ages, by a capricious change of positions in the firmament of human life, but every planet moving in its appropriate orbit, and every luminary maintaining its allotted place; and though occasionally an erratic star may shoot across the

hemisphere, which no weight of atmosphere can retard, and no laws of regular arrangement can control, yet the whole system, thus mutually illuminated, consolidated, and sustained, will present a scene of moral beauty to the eye, resembling that girdle of refreshing light, which we sometimes see encircling the nocturnal sky, and its peaceful and accordant play of operations will convey a sound of moral melody to the ear, more delightful than the harmony of the spheres.

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## BOOK I.

### THE LIMITS OF REASON IN THE INVESTIGATION OF REVEALED TRUTH STATED AND EXPLAINED.

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#### SECTION I.

##### THE GENERAL GROUNDS OF THIS INQUIRY.

WHEN a subject intimately connected with our interests, and deeply affecting our conduct, is proposed to our consideration, it is important, in order to arrive at a correct result, that it should be investigated by those powers of the mind, to which it is properly addressed. To secure this object, it is necessary that the province of every faculty, as it stands related to that question, should be accurately defined—that each should have its limits distinctly marked out, and its office clearly assigned to it. In the formation of our opinions, and in the regulation of our judgment, nothing is more essential than a methodical arrangement of our ideas—a well-balanced exercise of the intellectual powers. When these are allowed to act disproportionately—when one is unduly elevated, and another sunk below its just level—when they are suffered mutually to run into what more immediately comes under the jurisdiction of each other, it is impossible that the examination should issue in truth and certainty.

Some things are exclusively directed to the affections—to what may be termed the sensitive part of human nature. These consist in appeals to the passions, and in details of striking facts. Other things there are bearing more of a speculative character, which are submitted to the abstract operations of the understanding, and are to be surveyed in the pure light of the intellect: in this latter class are comprised the more refined branches of knowledge—the more subtile and abstruse parts of scientific and metaphysical inquiry. A third order of things there is, which in a greater or less degree, concerns all the faculties of the soul, whether sensitive or intellectual. Such, in an eminent and peculiar sense, is the Christian religion. As this comprehensive scheme was designed to influence the whole character of man—as it was intended to fill his soul—to spread, as it were, over the whole extent of his capacities, leaving no part of his nature unoccupied and unaffected, so it is admirably calculated to accomplish such an end. It is composed of facts, the most wonderful and affecting, to interest the heart; of speculations the most sublime, to employ the Imagination; of doctrinal truths, combining the utmost simplicity with the profoundest mystery, to exercise the Understanding; and of moral principles, the most binding and authoritative, to control the Will and to regulate the conduct.

In the volume of inspiration we have a full and accurate developement of this system: it becomes us, therefore, to study that divine communication with the most serious and devout attention, to ex-



amine it with impartiality and care, and to receive with meekness and simplicity whatever it expressly declares.

As, however, it was the design of Revelation to teach us what we could not otherwise have discovered, to inform us of what, without such a communication, we could not have known, it was to be expected that it should bring to our view a variety of objects far removed from, if not utterly at variance with, our previous conceptions. The analogies of nature, as a celebrated prelate\* has most ably and luminously shown, would have prepared us to find, that it would present difficulties, which our present faculties are by no means capable of solving, and have taught us to expect a disclosure of truths far surpassing the ordinary range of human comprehension; and as was to be naturally presumed, such proves to be the fact.

We find accordingly that Revelation brings within the reach of a partial apprehension, if not within the clear limits of the understanding, a variety of most important points, of which otherwise we could not have formed the most remote idea, and of which, after they have been revealed, our notions are of necessity obscure and indistinct. When we say that our views of these matters are obscure and indistinct, we do not mean to intimate, that the imperfection of our knowledge is such as to preclude the most firm and unhesitating belief. It is abundantly possible—as we shall have occasion to remark in the course of

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\* Bishop Butler.

these observations—to give assent to a proposition, when the various facts which stand inseparably connected with, and many of the truths which essentially enter into, that proposition, are but very partially understood.

In the wide range of divine Revelation, there are many things, which are perfectly accordant with the plain deductions of unenlightened reason; which it requires no effort, no violence, to our previous ideas to acknowledge, and of which we seem to recognize the truth at first view; while in the investigation of others, which are more mysterious and complex in their nature, or more indefinitely expressed, the reasoning faculty must be kept within due restraints, regulated in its requisite movements, and checked in its tendency to dangerous and unallowed excursions.

Many persons, and, indeed, whole classes of religionists, have either rejected the most fundamental truths, or embraced the most extravagant and unseemly errors, through a misconception, or neglect of the peculiar nature, and limited extent of that agency, which this distinctive faculty has a right to exert in scrutinizing every principle of human belief. One order of inquirers, by elevating the standard of Reason to an inordinate height, and by endeavouring to bring the whole range of divine Revelation beneath its distinct and commanding survey, has shut its eyes to some of the richest and most glorious provinces of Truth, which the volume of inspiration has disclosed, and has either sunk, amidst the giddiness of its own intellectual pride, into the depth of utter scepticism, or has contracted the system of its belief



into a few cold, barren, and uninfluential generalities. To say nothing of the milder and less malignant forms, in which this spirit of chilling Rationalism displays itself among ourselves,—throughout Germany and a large portion of the continent of Europe, it seems to prevail to a most alarming extent, and to operate with a most injurious influence\*.

Under the name of Neology, and with the pretensions of a new principle of mental illumination, it appeared for a while to have almost extinguished every ray of revealed truth in that country, which was first privileged to hail the light after the darkness of almost a thousand years. To define the exact character, or to trace the whole progress of the system, would be a hopeless and unprofitable attempt. Like most other theories of error and delusion, it sets out with the assumption of a great and unquestionable truth—that Revelation cannot be really opposed to Reason; but while, amidst the process of philosophical refinement, this truth is made to pass through successive stages of subtilization, and rises through the varied gradations of transcendentalism, it soon assumes a new form, and enters into new combinations, losing every salutary and celestial element, sending forth a noxious fume of infidel speculations and absurdities, like those fetid gases which sometimes evolve under the operations of the crucible, and leaving a dry residuum of religious formality and

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\* Recently, however, a sounder spirit has been gradually gaining ground, and the distinguishing principles of a more enlightened, because a more Christian, philosophy have to a considerable extent regained their ascendancy.

hypocrisy. In contemplating the deadly effects of this system upon the minds of those who are initiated into its mysteries, we are reminded of a fatal incident, said to have occurred in one of the German universities at an early period in the history of chemical science, when two young men, engaged in the pursuit of what had claimed the attention, and baffled the skill of alchemists of every age, fell victims to the poisonous influence of carbonic acid gas, supposed by many to have been a spirit of darkness allowed to destroy them for their avarice, but explained by a more experienced naturalist to have been nothing else than the spirit of charcoal. Equally injurious to the life of religion, and to the spiritual welfare of the soul, is that process of interpretation applied to the doctrines and principles of Revelation, which destroys and neutralizes their very essence, by subjecting them to the debasing influence of a proud and bewildered philosophy, dignified with the name of Reason.

Others there are who go to an opposite extreme, who, in mistaken reverence for the authority of Scripture, and under the idea of magnifying the importance of divine Revelation, and of closing up every avenue against the pride and self-sufficiency of human wisdom, discard Reason altogether, and deny the competency of her tribunal, to pass judgment upon principles of a higher order. Reason and Faith they have been accustomed to consider as standing in direct opposition to each other; and the very name of the former used in connexion with any alleged doctrine of Scripture, they consider little short of pro-

faneness, and as an encroachment upon the sovereignty of the latter. They forget that the one is as much a divine endowment, bestowed upon us for useful and necessary purposes, as the other, and that however bright and clear may be the light of revealed truth, yet, without the aid of Reason, as an organ of mental perception, we can no more form an estimate of the objects which it discloses, than we can discern the diversified colours of a distant scenery, irradiated by the beams of the natural sun, without the instrumentality of our eyes. In consequence of this confusion of ideas, arising from their want of a correct view of the real functions of Reason, in relation to the discoveries of the Bible, and in the economy of the Christian character, they are liable to embrace the most chimerical and absurd notions, as the immediate dictates of inspiration; nor is it possible that they should accurately distinguish between the authoritative and direct communications of heaven, and the visionary suggestions of their own fancy. The effect is, that they often run into the most dangerous errors of mysticism and enthusiasm. Under these circumstances, it is obviously a matter which deeply concerns the best interests of truth and piety, that the legitimate use of human Reason, in forming a judgment of the doctrines of Revelation, should be clearly unfolded—that the limits be assigned within which it may with advantage exercise its functions, and with propriety pronounce its decisions, and that the boundaries be established, beyond which it cannot safely proceed.

In the following Inquiry it will be our endeavour

to trace, and distinctly to mark out these important limitations. But before we enter upon this investigation, it may be necessary to settle the meaning of the term generally employed to designate the faculty, the use of which we proposed to examine. "Reason" is an expression of a very vague and indeterminate import—capable, according to the connexion in which it stands, of a variety of acceptations. In the most enlarged sense it signifies the perception of the eternal and unchangeable *fitness of things*, showing the mutual relation of causes and effects, and teaching how the best ends can be secured by the best means. Thus the Supreme Being, in the constitution, government, and general economy of the universe, may be said to act in accordance with the principles of Reason. Limited in its import, and considered as an attribute of the human character, Reason constitutes that capacity of the mind, by which a judgment is formed on a cool and discriminative survey of the grounds of belief—that intellectual faculty, in the exercise of which a conclusion is arrived at, after a careful and diligent examination of premises.

To form such a judgment, whether it relates to the truth or error of a proposition, or to the rectitude and propriety, or the injustice and folly of an action, it is not necessary that there should be a long and complicated process of ratiocination. Whatever the understanding pronounces upon these questions, however brief or apparently instantaneous may be the verdict, provided its decision will bear the test of deliberate examination, must be considered as falling within the unquestionable range of reason. Prompt-

ness and readiness of acquiescence in such cases, so far from proving an independence of the jurisdiction of Reason, in reality evince the highest perfection of Reason, as resulting from a faculty of generalization, which passes on to the ultimate fact of the case with the same rapidity and certainty, as an expert mathematician perceives the truth of a theorem, without going through the tedious process of actual demonstration. Some persons there are, indeed, and, among these, the ingenious Dr. Hancock, in his very interesting *Essay on Instinct*, who confine the exercises of Reason to such things only as directly fall under the notice of what is technically called the Discursive Faculty; and, as such, they almost entirely separate it from all connexion with religion. It is true, that there is such a power as Instinct, and that it is absolutely necessary to the preservation and well-being of man, prior to the development of Reason, and of those animals, to which the discursive faculty is not granted, or at least granted in a very limited degree. But it is surprisingly forgotten, that as far as man is governed by instinct, or by any internal light analogous to instinct—as is obvious in the case of infants—he is not, and cannot be the subject of moral obligation. So far as he is capable of religion, or of feeling a sense of duty, which religion throughout involves, he must be able to form an estimate of the grounds of that duty: and what is this but an exercise of reason, in a degree more or less enlightened; or, if the phrase be preferred, of the Discursive Faculty? A child, no doubt, may be conscious of many pleasing and amiable affections, especially of grateful

love and tenderness towards its parents, without any laborious calculation of the grounds of filial obligation; but then it would be absurd to attempt to bring a system of moral principles, involving questions of remote truth and investigation to operate upon such a subject. This method of instruction must be reserved, until its powers of thought and understanding are so far unfolded, as to be able to appreciate its import. It might love its parents with an instinctive attachment—it might act in a thousand ways, necessary and perfectly suitable to its own welfare and security; but it could neither believe it as a truth, nor feel it as a duty, that it should thus act. These perceptions and emotions imply the possession of a power of estimating relations, which, in such a case, was evidently wanting.

Now, whatever may have been the internal or supernatural light vouchsafed unto man, it is unquestionable that Divine Revelation is a system of illumination and instruction, which comes upon him from without, and to the appreciation of which it is implied, that he is possessed of correspondent powers: for in the communication of this gracious scheme it is assumed that man is not only endued with certain faculties, but also that these faculties have arrived at a certain degree of ripeness, in order that it may exert any salutary influence upon the character. The chief of these faculties, as most intimately connected with the belief of truth and the recognition of duty, we call Reason, to the comparative feebleness and inadequacy of which, Revelation is a friendly auxiliary, and not an overbearing antagonist. The light



of Revelation, and that of right Reason, indeed, are not so much opposite in their nature, as different in their degree—just as it is the same celestial influence that emanates in fainter gleams from the moon, and darts in brighter radiance from the glowing disk of the sun. Such appears to be the legitimate import of Reason, as expressive of that faculty, which distinguishes man as having arrived at that state of intellectual maturity, which renders him a proper subject of religion, and as capable of belief and of moral obligation. In the ordinary transactions of life, the term Reason is frequently employed to express the cause of an event, without any direct and obvious reference to the operations of a mind—the effect, however, being considered as connected with its cause by that chain of dependency, which forms the groundwork of all intelligent reasoning.

It is obvious that, in the present inquiry, Reason must be considered in the second of the senses here assigned to it—as constituting that faculty of the soul, in the exercise of which sound judgment or opinion is formed. And were this faculty always correct and consistent in its operations, there would be no danger of its leading into errors and false conclusions. If it was to be invariably regulated by sound principles—if it was supplied with an adequate measure of light to discover what *were* and *were not* just and sufficient grounds of belief—if, in short, the Reason of *man* was in all cases guided by the *truth* of *things*, it could not fail of being right in its deductions. But the evil is, that this, like every power of the human mind, is become feeble, disordered, and defective.



Hence it is often guilty of acting in direct violation of its own character, or rather of what *was* its character in its original state of strength and unbiassed rectitude: it is liable to become the dupe of fancy on the one hand, or the slave of prejudice on the other, and thus by receiving the reveries of imagination as the light of truth, or by rejecting the declarations of truth as the phantoms of imagination—to run into either extreme of scepticism, or superstitious belief. It should seem, that no judgment ought, or, indeed, *can* be formed without an exercise of some species of reasoning, but the data on which this reasoning is built must entirely depend upon the nature of the subject; and the nice point in each case—a point in which man often fails—is, what *does* and what *does not* constitute due evidence. There are two kinds of evidence totally distinct from each other, but both of them, in their order, constituting a firm and adequate basis of belief—the evidence of sense, or that which is founded on external phenomena, and the evidence of testimony.

In the works of nature, and in the primary investigations of science, the first of these evidences exclusively has place. We have an instinctive assurance implanted in our bosoms by the hand of nature, that the intimations of our senses are real demonstrations of the state of things around us; and hence our Reason justly concludes, that things *are* as they *appear* to be. Let the intimations be repeated, and applied to subjects similar to those by which they have been already suggested, and they will constitute that inductive evidence which forms the basis of the

modern philosophy of experiment, in opposition to the ancient, which was in reality a philosophy of theory. In historical or traditionary details on the other hand, or in the declaration of truths before unknown, the evidence is obviously that of testimony; and moreover, the claim of that testimony to be received as a ground of belief, must wholly depend upon the character of the narrator or proposer, and upon the quality of the declarations which he makes. Of this latter kind, authenticated, indeed, in its original enforcement, by the most powerful and convincing appeals to the senses, is the evidence on which divine Revelation principally rests its claims; and the object of the present Inquiry is to *define* what is the legitimate province of Reason in forming an estimate of this evidence, and to show how far it is required or allowed to go, in receiving or rejecting the propositions which suspend their proof upon it. In the prosecution of this inquiry, we shall range our observations under these two general divisions:—First, we shall endeavour to show how far Reason *ought to go*—in other words, *how far the reasoning faculties may be rightly and beneficially exercised in judging of subjects of Revelation*; and, secondly, we shall attempt to point out *the boundaries within which their range must be confined*—leaving whatever other regions Revelation has brought to view to the reign of an implicit and adoring Faith.

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## SECTION II.

REASON AUTHORIZED TO JUDGE OF THE CHARACTER AND  
EVIDENCES OF A PROFESSED REVELATION.

WE remark then, in the first place, that it lies within the legitimate province of Reason *to judge of the Character and Evidences of a professed Revelation*. Although this noble and distinguishing attribute, in its present state of obtuseness and infirmity, is liable to commit great and grievous errors, in the attempt to penetrate into the deep obscurity of the divine mysteries—even after those mysteries have been partially unveiled, yet the interests of truth are not likely to be promoted by discarding the use of it altogether. It has been often asserted, indeed, that Reason has little or nothing to do with the nature of the truths alleged to be communicated from above—that it is not so much her business to inquire *what* they are, as whether they have been really revealed. It is very true, that Reason is bound—and, indeed, it is one of her first dictates—to receive whatever God hath declared, as truth. But how is it to be ascertained, whether such a statement has proceeded from Him? Is it replied, by the evidence of the miracles with which it is authenticated? But then, how does it appear that miracles are an adequate proof of a Revelation? Is it not, that Reason, as an instinctive principle of our nature, informs us that there is an inseparable connexion between causes and effects, and that the effects under consideration could result only from the exertion of a supernatural

Power? And were it possible that doctrines, clearly contrary to the very first and most decided intimations of this original faculty of our minds, should be confirmed by the most brilliant array of miracles that the world hath ever seen, they could have no adequate claim upon our assent, because they would be subversive of that which is to us the foundation of all certainty and belief. This representation hath no analogy whatever to the sceptical allegation of Hume, that miracles, being contrary to experience, however strongly attested, can never be entitled to belief. For miracles, such at least as are recorded in the Old and New Testament, have nothing in them that is contrary to Reason, but are perfectly accordant with its principles, provided only we suppose the interposition of a power superior to that, which is exerted in the ordinary operations of nature. If, indeed, a miracle could be shown to be impossible or absurd, that miracle would cease to deserve credit, or be of any value as a proof of any branch of divine Revelation. Reason is, therefore, fully entitled to investigate the nature of the miracle, as well as of the doctrine which it is intended to authenticate. It must be always borne in mind, that the understanding of man can no otherwise be addressed, even by the voice of Revelation itself, than through the medium of his rational powers. How else, indeed, could he appreciate the merits, perceive the importance, and examine the proof of a Revelation? How else could he know it to be a genuine communication from heaven? How else could he distinguish the form of immortal truth, descending in simple majesty from

the skies, from those splendid combinations of error and falsehood which, in different regions of the globe, raise their pretensions so high, and lift up their heads with such deceitful and imposing grandeur? How else could he discover the transcendent excellency of the religion of Jesus, as compared with the superstition of the false prophet of Mecca, the preposterous institutes of Brahma, or the frantic rites of Budhu. Let us, for a moment, suppose man in a state of utter ignorance of all religion, except what he could collect from the light of nature, or the scattered beams of tradition, antecedently to the first vouchsafement of a divine communication, but with the powers of reason, in the mean while, in the highest degree cultivated and improved.

Under these circumstances, let us conceive an individual to approach him, professing to be a messenger from Heaven, and to come charged with the disclosures of eternal truth. After the message has been delivered and authenticated by such proofs as are deemed necessary and expedient, after the whole scheme has been developed and urged upon his reception, as the immediate communication of Heaven—we may conceive him to enter on a train of reflection, somewhat like the following:—"That there exists some great and mysterious Being, veiled from the eyes of mortals behind the visible scenes of the material universe, the mere contemplation of nature—of the various forms of animated existence—of the phenomena of earth and seas, and of the wonderful economy of the sun and moon and stars, is sufficient to convince me. After all my researches into the

nature and purposes of that stupendous Being had proved unavailing, and failed to satisfy my desires, I have now received a communication, represented as coming immediately from Himself. But on what ground can I give credit to it as such? Is it probable that He should make such a disclosure? Is it, in all respects, worthy of Him, to whom it is ascribed? Does it bear those marks of dignity? Is it characterized by that majesty, which might have been expected to distinguish the communication of one so great and glorious as the Governor of the Universe must be? And what again are its tendencies, in reference to the human character?—Is it adapted to the present circumstances, and to the future prospects of man? Is it calculated to operate beneficially upon his happiness, and his moral habits? And, finally, what are the credentials, by which its divine origin and its binding authority are vindicated? Are its evidences unexceptionable, satisfactory and convincing—such as abundantly to sanction my acquiescence in its truth, and even to demand my obedience to its dictates? If it be found to comprise all that is implied in these queries—then I cannot reject it; I am bound to receive it as a discovery of truth in the highest degree important to man, and coming immediately from God Himself; to do otherwise would be to act in opposition to the clearest intimations of my own judgment.”

In this process of reflection—a process something similar to which every man that embraces a Divine Revelation upon a firm and well-grounded conviction of his own mind must experience, who does not per-



ceive that reason is the acting principle? And while it confines itself to such an investigation of the general character, tendency, and evidences of a professed Revelation, it is assuredly exercising its proper office, and whatever scheme cannot thus far submit to its severest scrutiny, it is unquestionably authorized to reject.

Nor is it any real objection to this view, that so many millions of our fellow-creatures, in the full possession of their natural faculties, receive the most monstrous and chimerical dogmas of superstition, as the principles of their faith and practice. These delusions maintain their ascendancy in the mind, not because a door of admission was opened to them by the hand of sound and well-regulated Reason, and because they are sanctioned by her authority, but because, through her infirmity, she did not vigorously resist their entrance, and does not decisively assert her right in their expulsion. Hence we find, that the higher any heathen sages rose to the dignity of reason, the more they were disposed to abjure the tenets of the popular superstition; the nearer they approached—though standing at an infinite distance, indeed, in their greatest approximations—to the purity, the sublimity, and the sobriety of pure religion; and the more deeply they were convinced of the necessity of divine and supernatural teaching, in order to arrive at correct notions. Reason, as Locke has well remarked, is the eye or the light of the mind. It constitutes that faculty, by means of which the soul perceives no less the objects presented to it by Revelation, than any other objects. One striking



effect of Revelation is, that in addition to the discoveries which it makes, and to the new scenes which it brings to the view, it also enables this faculty to judge more correctly of the subjects which it examines, than it could have previously done—like those glasses, which not only reveal new objects by a just concentration of the rays of light, but are found sometimes to improve the natural powers of vision. Hence, as a learned writer\* has truly observed, if modern sceptics and infidels, who professedly renounce all aid from Revelation, have formed somewhat better notions of what is termed Natural Theology, and have argued somewhat more accurately on some points of moral philosophy, than the ancient heathen, it is not that these later writers had more talent, or a greater depth of discernment, but because they have received an assistance from Revelation, which they are unwilling to acknowledge. We may add, that it is easier for *him* to draw the model of a building, bearing some remote resemblance to what it ought to be, who has had an opportunity of witnessing an edifice, combining in itself all the perfections of beauty and grandeur, though he should deny it to have been planned by the most consummate architect in the world, and though, under the influence of pride and caprice, he should disdain to avow that his sketches had been transferred from it, than it would be found by another,

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\* “For almost all the things, that are said wisely and truly by modern Deists, are plainly borrowed from that Revelation, which they refuse to embrace, and without which they never could have said the same things.”—DR. CLARKE. *Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion*. Prop. 7.

who had seen nothing but the huts of savages, or here and there a vast congeries of corrupt and unarranged materials.

From the preceding remarks, it appears that Reason viewed, not as a principle standing in opposition to Faith, as is sometimes the case, but simply as the judging and discriminating faculty of man, is allowed, and, indeed, required, in the case of a Revelation, however generally acknowledged and received, to proceed so far as to inquire into its internal character, and to weigh its external evidences; and, in accordance with the free and unbiassed result of this examination, to reject or to embrace it. But we cannot dismiss this part of the subject, without seriously adverting to the immense importance—the absolute necessity that Reason, in performing this part of her office, should disengage herself from all prejudice and passion, from all pride and self-exalting views—that with the earnestness and importunity of a suppliant, and with the simplicity and docility of a child, she should seek to be guided in her decisions from above.

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### SECTION III.

REASON REQUIRED TO RECEIVE NO ALLEGED DOCTRINE OF REVELATION, WITHOUT SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE THAT IT REALLY FORMS A PART OF THAT COMMUNICATION.

ANOTHER point, to which Reason, tempered with these qualifications, may fearlessly advance, in judging of subjects of Revelation, is, that it should receive no *particular tenet*, represented as contained in a

Revelation, already embraced as a whole, without sufficient evidence that it really constitutes a part of that Revelation. In communities, professedly Christian, this is the chief question of debate. And in deciding this, Reason must quit the wide generalities of abstract speculation, by which, in some measure, it formed its opinion of the claims and merits of Revelation, as an immediate communication from heaven, and confine its attention to the written documents, in which its principles are embodied. It must here descend from the more congenial element of philosophical investigation, to the humbler walks of philology and criticism, of reading, searching, and comparing of texts. We now assume that the document, under investigation, after passing through the process of examination already detailed, is acknowledged to be of divine authority; and, therefore, that every statement which it contains must be right, however contrary it may prove to what we might have previously expected. The mind must be prepared implicitly to receive whatever the sober and enlightened judgment pronounces to be really contained within the *record*. It is true, that consistently with the most unqualified recognition of the absolute certainty and infallibility of inspired truth, there is a very extensive range for the exercise of sound and judicious criticism, in the investigation of the original languages—in the collation of manuscripts—in the reconciliation of apparent discrepancies—in the interpretation of figurative and emblematic representations—in the limitation within due and necessary bounds of parabolical illustrations—in the discovery of the rich nucleus of doctrinal

truth, or practical precept, as it is sometimes hidden under the gorgeous imagery of prophetic diction, and in the explication of the genuine import of conventional phraseology and local allusion. Criticism, modestly applied to these points, is no more than Reason may justly demand, and Revelation freely concedes, as necessary to its due apprehension. But to rush among the inspired writers, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and to cut off, as with the barbarian's tomahawk, whatever limb appears out of proportion with a previously conceived system, or to cast them, like Pelias, into the caldron of rationalism, boiling with pride and self-sufficiency, in order that their antiquated forms may come forth in all the freshness of philosophical youth and beauty; or, finally, to apply to them an instrument of torture, framed by modern inquisitors, and technically called by the name of Exegesis, in order to extort from them a confession of what it has been beforehand determined that they ought to declare. This is profaneness the most unhallowed—this is an outrage the most daring upon the sacredness of celestial truth.

But although the complete and unreserved admission of the truth of Revelation exempts it from all further responsibility at the bar of human Reason, so far as its clear and unequivocal declarations are concerned, yet, in judging whether such a doctrine be one of its distinct annunciations, that faculty must still be allowed to have an important and extensive jurisdiction. "I believe the Bible,"—the inquirer may be supposed to say—"I am fully persuaded that every sentence which it contains is the

truth of God—I am not now to inquire, whether this invaluable book is a record of the works, the will, and the purposes of Jehovah; but is this particular doctrine one among the manifold truths which it declares? Is this article of faith one of its clear, express, and unquestionable propositions? It is not enough to convince me of its claim to my reception, that it forms a component and essential part in some human system—that it is enumerated among the credenda of some Christian Church, whatever deference I may be willing to pay to its authority;—it is not sufficient, that it may have been adopted by a multitude of others, many of them wise and learned (though this, of course, entitles it to a respectful and candid examination); that it is a corner-stone in the scheme of one party, and a distinguishing principle in the creed of another. I can conscientiously embrace it only on a full conviction, that, to the best of my judgment, it has been revealed in this very form, and, so far as I can comprehend it, in this sense by God himself.”

In this investigation, conducted in the exercise of his rational powers, accompanied, it is to be observed, by prayer for divine guidance and illumination, the inquirer appears to act consistently with the oracles of truth, as well as with the principles of his nature. For what more is here implied than that a man cannot be required to believe a doctrine, until, after due examination, he has ground to be persuaded, that it is, indeed, a doctrine of Revelation! The Scriptures themselves invariably address man, as a being possessed of reason and intelligence,

and by so doing invite him to bring these faculties to bear on their own contents; and any opinion which is not the result of an inquiry into the word of God, regulated by this principle, as a mere opinion, can be of little value. The office of Reason here, therefore, seems to be to judge of the *meaning*, the *connexion*, and the *general analogy of revealed truth*; and the limits, to which it is allowed to advance in the exercise of this function, is to reject those doctrines, and those only, which have no place in the volume of inspiration. Whatever it there finds, it is bound to regard as sacred and inviolable.

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#### SECTION IV.

NO DOCTRINE TO BE RECEIVED, WHICH IS PALPABLY OPPOSED TO  
THE PRINCIPLES OF COMMON SENSE.

- . A THIRD use to which Reason may be lawfully converted, in judging of subjects of Revelation, is to guard against the mistaken reception of any doctrines which are contrary to the *clear evidence of intuitive belief*,—or, as it may be more simply expressed, to the *principles of common sense*. When we employ this expression, we do not mean to allow, that any such doctrines are to be found on the pages of the Bible. But it is a fact, as certain as it is lamentable, that through the weakness, the ignorance, or the hypocrisy of professed believers, tenets have been too frequently deduced from it, which are justly obnoxious to this charge. In what other light can we view the absurd notion of transubstantiation,



and several others of the senseless dogmas of the Romish church, which, after all the attempts of scholastic ingenuity to reconcile to our understanding by subtle disputations and refined theories, we find it impossible to regard otherwise than with feelings of pity and contempt? It must also be admitted, that in the explication of the more obscure and mysterious parts of Scripture,—in the expanded illustration of topics which are there but concisely stated—in the full and confident developement of purposes to be hereafter executed in the order of the divine proceedings, which are there but darkly hinted, those, whom we may hope to be, on the whole, sincere Christians, have sometimes allowed a range to their imagination, over which it would have been well if the voice of Reason had been suffered to exercise some control. In confirmation of this remark, it is sufficient to advert to the views, which have been sometimes taken, of the mystic correspondence supposed to exist between the doctrines of Scripture and the operations of nature, of the union which subsists between Christ and his people, and of the influences of the Holy Spirit. It is lamentable to think of the utter sacrifice of all the principles of common sense—the total prostration of all that is sober and wise in the understanding, and of all that is discriminative in the reasoning faculty, which the reception of some of the opinions held upon these important points involves.

As belonging to the same class, we might also refer to notions sometimes founded upon the intimations of prophecy, especially those which respect



the millennial reign of Christ, and the condition of the world and its inhabitants during that period. Upon this and similar questions, to which Scripture, for wise ends doubtless, has supplied us with but few brief allusions, a variety of hypotheses have been formed, which calm and enlightened Reason pronounces, to use the mildest term, no better than the illusive anticipations of mistaken, though sincerely ardent zeal. In these and the like matters, the appropriate and lawful employment of Reason, is to watch over the progress of the Fancy, and to prevent her unbridled vagaries from encroaching upon the sacredness of truth. Whatever is palpably opposed to those principles which, by the necessity of our nature, we are bound to regard as true, Reason is assuredly required to proceed so far as to reject.

But here let us not for a moment be supposed to countenance the pernicious and unscriptural idea, that nothing is to be admitted as a matter of faith, which is not discoverable, nor fully comprehensible by man's unassisted Reason. If there be any one notion, in the catalogue of human errors, which exhibits more strikingly than another the pride of an ignorant and unhumiliated mind (for that mind must surely be called ignorant and unhumiliated which shows so little acquaintance with its own capabilities, and so grievously overrates them,) it is this,—if there be any one form, in which a specious philosophy, while it professes to make wise, converts its votaries into fools, it is this. While those who would totally exclude Reason from all communication with subjects

of divine revelation, frequently receive truth unaccompanied with its proper evidence, and mixed with much alloy; they, who labour under the delusion last noticed, generally reject the distinguishing and most important truths of Revelation altogether.

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## PART II.

## SECTION I.

A DOCTRINE OF REVELATION IS NOT TO BE REJECTED, BECAUSE IT  
COULD NOT HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED WITHOUT SUPERNATURAL  
ASSISTANCE.

HAVING, in the preceding remarks, attempted to show how far the limits of Reason may be lawfully extended in its entrance upon the field of Revelation, with a view of correcting the misapprehension of the first class, above specified, we shall now endeavour, as was proposed, to mark out, with a more immediate reference to the errors of the last, certain points on the same holy ground, to which that curious faculty cannot, without danger of profanation, be allowed to advance.

As one of these boundaries, we observe, that Reason *ought not to proceed so far as to reject a doctrine conveyed in a professed communication from Heaven, on the mere ground of its being undiscoverable without supernatural and Divine assistance.* The reverse of this position would amount to a denial of the need and utility of Revelation altogether; for, if the human understanding could, by its own efforts, find out whatever is of importance to be known, where was the necessity of any further information? Or if nothing is to be received with assent, but what was subject to the

previous view of the reasoning faculty, to what purpose was it to bring any other truths to light? But here it is a question of peculiar interest, and attended with considerable difficulty, what portion of those doctrines, which constitute the great mass of scriptural truth, must be considered as discoverable by the well-directed operations of unaided Reason, and what as standing utterly beyond its reach. Some have gone to the length of affirming, that without a Revelation man can absolutely know nothing relative to the being and attributes of God, and to the acceptable mode of worshipping Him. Others maintain that the great essentials of religion, which they confine within a very limited compass, are sufficiently legible on the page of nature, requiring only a moderate share of skill and attention to be clearly deciphered; and that the end of revelation is at best but to embody in written language, and to state with somewhat greater precision, what before existed, as it were, in the form of hieroglyphics.

Extremes are, however, rarely safe; unless we allow that the light of nature conveys some information respecting the Author and Ruler of the universe, Revelation will be left without its evidence; for how can we receive as true and obligatory the word of One, whose very existence, independently of that communication, we have not the means of ascertaining? Unless we acknowledge, on the other hand, that the Bible does contain a variety of important and most deeply-interesting truths, to the knowledge of which we could never otherwise have attained, Revelation is comparatively without its use. The

opinion of the great Lord Bacon on this question is, that philosophy, by which he means a wise and intelligent contemplation of the works of nature, is sufficient to "confute Atheism, but not to inform Religion." If the two schemes of natural and revealed religion were so separate and distinct from each other, as that the one stood in no need whatever of the concurrent testimony of the other, how is it that the volume, in which the latter is contained, so frequently directs its reader to study the lectures of the former, as they are inscribed on the productions of the earth, on the succession of the seasons, and on the brilliant phenomena of the nocturnal heavens? If they were, on the other hand, so nearly commensurate in the discoveries intimately affecting the character and condition of man; if the one displayed, in the palpable exhibition of facts and sensible appearances, all, of any practical value, that the other held forth in the fainter representation of written phraseology, where was the necessity or the expediency, that Revelation should at different periods be introduced into the world, attended with circumstances so striking and extraordinary, so expressive of its importance, so demonstrative of its dignity, and so convincing of its truth? If it communicated nothing worth knowing, but what every one could find out by the diligent application of a well-disciplined understanding to the phenomena of the natural world, this surely could have been effected without such a display of power as was exhibited in the repeated suspension of the laws of the universe.

Our view of the comparative importance of these

two systems, or rather our view of the one grand system, formed by the combined operations of both, will be regulated by our notion of that influence which religion is intended to exert upon the human character. If we consider this influence as required to reach no farther than the regulation of the outward conduct, as calculated simply to adapt man to his present circumstances, without any reference to his future existence, by drawing out in visible colours the lines of personal and relative duty; if, in a word, we consider religion as a mere scheme of ethics, then it is natural to conclude, that the Bible contains but few truths, that were of consequence for man to know, which could not have been learnt from other sources. It must be confessed, that, for this meagre purpose, the summaries of Aristotle, of Cicero, and others, though necessarily feeble in their influence through the want of a firm foundation and adequate sanctions, are in few external points defective. But, if there be other relations in which we stand, than those which immediately concern this world; if there be other principles by which we are required to be actuated, than those which enter into the schemes of heathen morality—if there be other duties which it concerns us to practise, than those which spring from our varied circumstances and connexions with the things of time and sense, it is upon these relations, these principles, these duties, that we require to be informed.

That man may be placed in a state in which intelligence upon these points is useful and neces-



sary to him, no one possessed of the use of his faculties will presume to deny. Let it even be admitted, that he may discover the being and leading perfections of Jehovah, by the mere contemplation of his works\*: let him be supposed capable of adjusting, with the nicest precision, the limits of moral obligation; what a small progress does all this imply, that he has made in that knowledge, which the circumstances of a sinful, and, at the same time, immortal Being evidently demand! Must he not be conscious that he has oftentimes offended that great Sovereign, whose existence he has argued with a conclusiveness, which will not suffer him to doubt; that he has violated those attributes, to the perception of which the light of nature has conducted him? Must he not feel that he has frequently trampled upon those very obligations, which he so clearly knew to be binding upon him? And must he not, under this view, unless his moral sensibilities be utterly extinguished, be oppressed with an overwhelming weight of guilt? But how is this burden to be removed? Can he discover the exact method by which the balm of forgiveness may be administered unto him? Has he any certainty that it can be administered at all? In the whole range of possibilities, can he perceive one channel, through which he can pronounce, with assurance, that the streams of mercy may flow unto him? The wisest

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\* Ουκουν, ω ξερε, δοκει ραδιον ειναι αληθενοντας λεγειν ως εισι θεοι. Πως, &c.—Πρωτον μεν γη και ηλιος αστρα τε τα ξυμπαντα και τα των ωρον διακεκοσμημενα καλως οντως, εναντοις τε και μησι διειλημμενι, και οτι παντες Ελληνες τε και βαρβαροι νομιζουσιν ειναι θεους.—ΠΛΑΤΟ, *De Leg.* lib. x.



of unenlightened sages\*, he who may be deemed the representative of all that is laborious in research, and of all that is elevated and refined in speculative reasoning, without hesitation, avows that he cannot.

Under these circumstances of ignorance and doubt, the page of Revelation unfolds itself before him. At once a new world bursts upon his view; what he had before faintly conjectured, amidst the twilight glimmer of Reason, he now beholds as in the brightness of the meridian sun. At once the mist of time retires before the blaze of the heavenly light, which has visited him. Guided by the day-spring of Revelation, he looks back to the very threshold of the creation—he witnesses the efficacious energy of divine power—the wondrous display of divine wisdom—the effusive flow of divine benevolence, respectively exhibited in the formation and arrangement of the whole universe. He discovers his own origin. He sees himself formed by the plastic hand of the Deity—his body raised out of the dust, and his soul, immortal as its Author, breathed into him by his Maker. He is made acquainted with the primary condition of his being; he learns the terms of the covenant, under which, yet pure, sinless, and reflecting the image of his Creator, he was placed in the garden of Eden; he witnesses the dismal breach of that covenant, and in that breach he is instructed to place the origin of evil in all its modifications. After he has been thus made a spectator of the fall, the guilt, the

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\* Plato.

condemnation, and the attendant moral degradation of the species, he is led to a view of a glorious plan of redemption, by which the ruins of that awful catastrophe may be repaired; a plan, which Jehovah, in his threefold character, designated by the appellations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, undertook to accomplish. In this scheme, he is taught to consider the office of the Father as more particularly consisting in giving his only begotten Son, to expiate by his sufferings the guilt of mankind—that of the Son, in cheerfully engaging in, and successfully performing, that work—and that of the Holy Ghost, in applying the benefits of the redemption, effected by the death and righteousness of the Son, to the soul of the penitent and believing sinner; in enlightening, sanctifying, and comforting him, so that by a process of renovation, carried on through the whole remaining portion of his earthly existence, he may be made meet for the enjoyment of the future blessedness of Heaven. In consequence of this gracious interposition of Jehovah, he finds that man is now placed under an entirely new dispensation—a dispensation which requires but a sincere and deep repentance, accompanied with a lively and operative faith on his part, to endue him with the inestimable blessings of forgiveness, peace, and reconciliation—to remove his guilt—to justify him in the eye of the divine law—and to invest him with a title to eternal glory. To support his mind under the gloomy anticipations of sickness and death, he is enabled to dart his eye across that darksome valley, and to catch a glimpse, as through an illuminated vista, of the

region of immortality, which lies beyond it. At the end of that vista, the morning of the resurrection opens with gladdening beams, and exhibits its triumphs over the tomb.

Now, the question is, whether he is to reject this whole mass of soothing, cheering, and elevating information, merely because it eluded the keenest scrutiny of his intellectual eye, and baffled the efforts of his native powers of research; or is he thankfully to receive it, after having submitted it to that mode of examination, which we have already represented as just and necessary? It is astonishing to find the reluctance with which men give credit to the Divine Being, on his own testimony. So far as his declarations coincide with the obvious intimations of their own senses, and correspond with the previous deductions of their own understanding, they are generally ready to admit them. But the moment he soars above them, and brings to their view things, which lay not within the scope of their limited capacity, they instantly begin to be filled with jealousy and suspicion, and to express their apprehension, lest their Reason should be imposed upon by empty and unmeaning sounds. How far this disinclination to receive new truths, delivered in the form of an immediate communication from above, may arise from a somewhat overweening sense of the strength of their own mind, and of the extent of their own investigations, is assuredly a matter entitled to grave consideration. To the admission of doctrines not before known, and to an acquaintance with which the profoundest researches of man's unaided intel-

lect could afford no clue, they seem to be actuated by that feeling of repugnance, with which a philosopher would acknowledge the discoveries of a novice in a science, to the elucidation of which, the labours of his own life had been directed; or a navigator, who had circumscribed the globe, those of subsequent adventurers in regions, where he had pushed his enterprises, as he had imagined, to the utmost bounds of possibility. Such persons, it is obvious, without a large share of that modesty and self-diffidence, which do not always fall to the lot of scientific inquirers, are apt to view the limits of their own knowledge as the limits of all that can be known. Having, like Hercules, arrived at a point beyond which they cannot with safety or certainty launch their narrow skiff, they there set up the terminating pillars, which they vainly pronounce the pillars of the world\*.

Thus, the men to whom we have referred, many of them highly ingenious, and some apparently not ill-affected to the truth, having made the moral relations and destinies of man an object of their study and research, find no difficulty in acquiescing in those propositions, which are palpable and essential to their present safety, but are inclined to consider every accession of information upon points which they could not satisfactorily clear up, as a reflection upon their own understanding, and prefer groping in midnight darkness—the darkness of

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\* Τῶδε υπερβυλλοντι αὐτῶν φθονοῦντες ἦδε, καὶ ἀπιστοῦσιν.—THUCID.  
lib. 2, λϵ.

ignorance and doubt, rather than submit to avail themselves of what they deem the humiliating advantage of a light, which did not spring from themselves. The eye of unassisted Reason, when applied to spiritual and eternal things, is very dim and clouded; its sphere of vision is exceedingly contracted. It would be as absurd, therefore, to make this faculty the standard of communicable or demonstrable truths, as it would be to judge of the extent of the ocean by the line of the visible horizon, or to estimate the dimensions of the stars by the apparent magnitude of the points which bestud the nocturnal skies. They, however, deem it more creditable to this feeble and idolized power, to entertain no truth, to give a favourable reception to no opinion, but what *she* has introduced to their acquaintance. We may sometimes have had an opportunity of witnessing, with what perfect self-complacence and contempt the untaught inquirer into the laws of nature, habituated just to that degree of reflection, which was sufficient to make him obstinate, heard some of the most striking and best established facts of astronomical science; with what a smile of disdain he listened to the description of the telescopic appearances of the several planets of our system, and especially to the intimation that the sun, in reference at least to us, was, comparatively speaking, stationary; and that, in order to produce the grateful succession of day and night, the globe of the earth every four-and-twenty hours whirled upon its own axis; we may recollect, with what confidence and assurance he brought forward the testimony of reason and com-

mon sense, against these preposterous representations. Nay, we may recollect a period in our own lives, when, willing to give a general credence to the statements above mentioned, we were, notwithstanding, in no small degree puzzled how it was that we did not fall upon our heads, when in the course of the earth's rotary motion it became our turn to descend into what we deemed the lower part of the orbit which it described.

Will it be asked whence all this scepticism—this reluctance to admit truths demonstrable by the clearest evidence, arose? It may be confidently answered, that it arose from the imperfect and ill-directed use of reason, from an attempt at reconciling the propositions of science with the first dictates of sensible perception. There appears to be a somewhat similar relation between the intimations of sense and the deductions of Reason, that there is between the deductions of Reason and the disclosures of Revelation. As the first ought not to reject the demonstrations of the second, because it could not of itself have found out the facts which they prove, but seemed to suggest the very reverse, so neither ought the second to refuse the discoveries of the third, because they did not lie within the limits of its own researches; and the philosopher, who withholds his assent from an express truth of Revelation, merely because it lay out of the common range of the unassisted intellect, acts just as wisely as the untutored rustic, who would maintain, in opposition to the most unquestionable evidence, that the earth is perfectly stationary, that the sun and



other celestial bodies whirl around it in four-and-twenty hours, that the stars were so many glittering points fixed aloft in the firmament of heaven, and that the magnitude of the moon did not much exceed that of a crown piece. The notions of the latter are universally allowed among men of information to be whimsical and absurd in the extreme, because he listens to the suggestions of a fallible sense, without examining those intimations in the light of a superior and more investigating faculty. Those of the former are scarce less so, where he ventures to let loose his speculations upon the various concerns of an unseen world, with the glimmering taper of Reason for his sole and exclusive guide. To reject the noble discoveries which Revelation has made of the things of God, because they were previously imperceptible to the mind, would, indeed, resemble the conduct of the man, who would strenuously deny the existence of the diversified objects of a distant scenery, which the meridian sun clearly exhibited to view, because the same were not equally visible amidst the darksome gleams of evening, or the twinklings of the nocturnal glow-worm.

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## SECTION II.

REASON NOT JUSTIFIED IN REJECTING A DOCTRINE OF REVELATION  
BECAUSE IT CANNOT UNDERSTAND ITS EXACT MODE.

AND as a doctrine of Revelation ought not to be rejected on the mere score of its being previously undiscoverable by man's unassisted efforts, so neither



ought a doctrine clearly asserted in that heavenly communication to be denied our firm and decided assent, because we may be unable to comprehend *the exact mode* in which the facts that it affirms or involves may subsist. This, therefore, we would establish as another Limit, to which Reason, in the investigation of divine truth, cannot advance in the exercise of her right of rejection and disbelief, without violating her own character, and profaning the holy ground on which she has presumed to tread. To imagine that we are allowed to proceed to this length in regulating our views of the express declarations of Jehovah, implies, indeed, that the measure of our self-knowledge is exceedingly small, and our confidence in Him equally narrow. He must, doubtless, be possessed of no common share of presumption, who supposes that God can reveal no truth, or that it is not necessary and expedient that any truth *should* be revealed and credited, which *he* cannot fully understand. Of such persons, it may be hoped that the number is not considerable. There may be more, perhaps, who find some difficulty in conceiving how a doctrine *can* be properly believed, which is not fully comprehended.

There is a sense, in which the reverse of this proposition is undoubtedly true—a sense in which an assertion not understood cannot be believed, however true it may be in itself. If, for instance, one of the plainest and most obvious facts be stated in a foreign language, or if it be expressed in terms which convey no idea to the mind of the hearer, it is impossible that *that* fact should be to him an object

of belief, however he may repose a general confidence in the veracity of the narrator. The exercise of assent consists in associating and combining together ideas in a regular and orderly relation, and when the latter, constituting the requisite materials, are wanting, the former cannot exist. But here let it be carefully noticed, that there is no impossibility, or even difficulty in acquiescing in a connexion declared by competent authority to exist between a train of ideas, each of them separately perceived by the understanding, although the mode in which they combine, so as to result in the general truth, should be very indistinctly, or not at all observed. To illustrate this, we fear, rather obscure enunciation, as well as the remarks by which it was preceded, let us suppose a philosophical lecturer to lay the following truth before his pupil, in a language which he did not understand, or previously to his learning the meaning of the terms employed: "A ray of light is formed by the combination of the seven primitive colours." In this case there could be no exercise of assent, because no distinct ideas were conveyed to the mind. But let the pupil have a tolerably clear notion of the objects respectively specified by the terms of the proposition, and there is no difficulty in his firmly acquiescing in the general truth, that a ray of light is formed by the union of the seven distinct colours, although he may have never seen the prismatic experiment by which the fact is proved, nor have it in his power to form the most distant conception of the mode, by which the decomposition or reunion is effected, and the final result produced.

His assent rests upon the mere testimony of his instructor, and as he has no reason to distrust that testimony, he can believe with a certainty nearly as great as if he had personally witnessed the whole process, and perfectly comprehended the whole scheme. Or, to exemplify the case by another similar analogy, how easy is it to give the most prompt and unhesitating assent to a geometrical proposition, illustrated by a diagram, without the slightest knowledge of the process of demonstration. Where is the difficulty of believing, provided it be affirmed on credible authority, that the three interior angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, with a total ignorance of the properties in these figures, which render such an equality necessary? It involves no impossibility to believe the apparent paradox of the two asymptotic lines—always approximating and yet never meeting, than which nothing, according to our ordinary mode of conceiving the relations of quantity, can certainly be not only more strange, but absolutely more absurd. And yet, in the scientific view of the case, it is clearly seen to be demonstrable. The fact is, that truth, as an object of belief, is *the mere agreement of things*, or of *ideas as the representatives of things*, put into the form of naked propositions, without any necessary reference to the *mode* of their agreement. Few things appear at first sight more strange and incredible, than that an astronomer should have it in his power to measure the magnitude and the distances of the sun, moon and planets, in his study-chair, or on the top of his observatory. Suppose the philosopher,—Newton for

instance,—were to have taken a person wholly unacquainted with the principles of mensuration, and given him a cursory account of the process, by which the ultimate points in question were attained; would it not be to such a person a mystery as incomprehensible as any that is proposed to our faith in the whole compass of the Old and New Testament? And yet could he not, ought he not, upon the mere testimony of his knowing instructor, to give credit to the simple fact, that the sun, the moon, and the planets actually had been measured with, at least, a considerable approximation toward perfect accuracy, and that their respective dimensions amounted to such a number of miles? Would not the opposite conduct be considered extremely obstinate and unbecoming? Would it not be the plain dictate of ingenuous and unperverted reason, that unimpeachable veracity was to be implicitly depended upon, and that whatever obscurity the several cases involved, or appeared to involve, was to be attributed rather to narrowness of intellect and imperfection of knowledge, than to any thing really incomprehensible or impossible in themselves?

Our object in these analogical illustrations, to which many others might be added, especially from the sciences of Electricity and Chemistry, has been to show that there is none of the impossibility, sometimes imagined, in believing a truth declared and inculcated by infallible authority, although the mode in which its constituent parts mutually combine, so as to form that proposition, may be very indistinctly understood. Many doctrines of this description the

volume of inspiration evidently contains. We are required to receive, with the full assent of our heads and hearts, of our judgment and affections, a variety of truths, which not only eluded our powers of discovery, previously to their being revealed, but utterly surpass our comprehension, even when revealed. Of these, the scriptural account of the creation of the material universe, out of mere and absolute nothing, affords one striking example. This is a fact, which but few, if any, professed Christians ever thought of denying; but it is, notwithstanding, a fact, which we can no more understand, as to the precise manner in which it took place, than we can comprehend how the whole mass of existing matter could be inclosed within a nutshell. We believe it, because we find it asserted in a book, the veracity of which we cannot venture to question.

The confidence reposed in the divine declaration, however, in this instance, is not so repugnant to the exercise of the intellect, as is sometimes supposed. It is strikingly remarked by the Apostle, "*by faith we understand* (not merely *believe*) that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear." The process of *understanding*, in this connexion, evidently means a full and deliberate conviction of the judgment, arising from a clear perception of the adequacy of the means, the divine power accompanying the all-creating fiat, to the production of the end—the formation of a visible and material system out of pure nihility. But it does not imply, that we can perceive the manner in which real being was called

forth out of the depths of non-existence. So far is this from being the case, that it was held as a maxim among the whole host of the ancient philosophers, which none but the most ignorant and absurd would think of questioning, that “nothing really existing can be reduced to nothing, by any imaginable power:”

gigni,

De nihilo nihil, in nihilum nil posse reverti.

It is contended, however, with great force of argument, by the learned Cudworth, that the sentiment conveyed in this and similar maxims, was not intended to deny the possible origination of matter, but was directed against the atheists, and was designed to assert the impossibility that any thing should begin to exist, without an adequate cause. By faith in the declarations of Jehovah, we, however, understand that both the members of this vaunted and apparently self-evident maxim are false, so far as they relate to the substance of the material universe; while of the internal operation, by which its incorrectness was practically proved,—while, in fact, of everything connected with that stupendous transaction, beyond the exterior agency employed, (an agency, we know, capable of everything which does not involve a contradiction,) we are equally ignorant with those who most resolutely adhered to it.

The doctrine of a divine influence communicated by the Holy Spirit into the human mind, either to enrich it with infallible knowledge and with miraculous endowments, or merely to sanctify the affections, and to enlighten the understanding with the gift of



ordinary illumination, is another of those which we are required to believe on the testimony of Scripture, but the precise mode of which we cannot pretend to understand. With this tenet, in a perverted and mutilated form, the heathens of antiquity were not wholly unacquainted, as is manifest from their superstitious notions of oracular inspiration, and from the continual appeal of their poets, for the elevating and informing aid of certain superhuman beings, to which they gave the name of Muses. But while they retained some traditional knowledge of the fact, that supernatural assistance is necessary to illumine the human soul, and to purify it from earthly dross, they were totally ignorant of the Giver of that assistance, and of the means by which it is usually imparted. In these latter points, we have greatly the advantage over them. We know the Author, as well of that extraordinary illumination, which is necessary to qualify men for the office of delivering divine and infallible truths, as of that mild transforming influence which is, in every case, essential to the renovation of the character, and the new creation of the soul. We also know the means, in the use of which this sacred influence, so far as its object is to produce personal holiness, is for the most part communicated. But how it is exerted; by what kind of agency it affects the mind in the manner that it does; in accordance with what rules, or what principles, the operation is carried on, is, to a very considerable extent, an inexplicable mystery. We can no more unfold it to the view, than (to use the appropriate figure of Divine Revelation) we can tell how the

various members and lineaments of the unborn infant are formed in the mother's womb. But as we would not deny the evidence of fact, that the infant is thus mysteriously formed, so neither ought we to reject the express testimony of inspiration, that the influences of the Holy Spirit *do* thus mysteriously operate in the formation of the new man in Christ Jesus.

The plan of redemption, through Christ, viewed as a mediatorial scheme, constitutes also a branch of revealed truth, which we do not pretend that we can perfectly comprehend in all its parts. With the dismal cause which gave rise to it, we are acquainted; the stupendous grace and love, which suggested it to the mind of the Deity, and the wonderful wisdom displayed in the arrangement of it, we can admire and adore. Its amazing benefits, in reference to our own destinies, we can appreciate. But when we attempt to follow it up higher, to trace it to its ultimate reasons, to discover its original grounds and final principles, to sound its depths and scan its heights—when we endeavour to find out the exact congruity of a vicarious atonement to the propitiation of a supremely just and holy Being, and to the satisfaction of a violated law, and of a mutual transfer of guilt and righteousness between the sinner and the Saviour, between the criminal and the innocent—when we would represent to ourselves the perfect propriety of these and other things which they involve, upon principles of human reason, we must confess that, notwithstanding the many striking, and, for the most part, satisfactory analogies, by which they may be illustrated, we can form but a

partial and indistinct estimate of them. But are we, therefore, to reject the whole scheme—to deny its truth, and to refuse its blessings? This, truly, would be acting a wise part, and a part highly becoming the present extent of our knowledge and capacity.

To discard a system, in which we can discover so much glory—so much beauty—so much excellency, because we cannot perceive with accuracy the perfect harmony and consistency of all its relative parts, would be like shutting our eyes against the light of the sun, and denying that any such body existed, because we cannot tell by what laws that beneficent luminary hangs self-poised in the expanse of Heaven, or how he is upheld in air by some remote undefinable attraction. It would be going far towards realizing, in our belief, or rather disbelief, the profane scepticism of Hume, and the visionary idealism of Berkeley.

In presuming to judge of the reasons of the divine conduct, as far as they are revealed in the Bible, and they are doubtless revealed, so far as is suitable to our character and circumstances, we must always bear in mind that only

One part—one little part we dimly scan  
Through the dark medium of life's feverish dream.

When we hear plain and direct assertions, therefore, we must implicitly believe them. When, in these assertions, we meet with anything that surpasses our comprehension, we ought to ascribe it to its just cause;—we should feel it our privilege to become little children—to receive with meekness and sim-

plicity, what the express declarations of our Heavenly Father have made it our duty to receive—being fully assured that whatever object of implicit faith our capacities may now be unable completely to grasp—hereafter they will be so expanded and improved, as to understand with facility and precision,—that what we know not now, we shall know at a future period of our being.

But once more, the Doctrine of a Resurrection from the dead is eminently one of those which, though clearly asserted as truths on the pages of divine revelation, yet elude the keenest researches of the human intellect, as to the *particular mode* in which their component parts stand relatively connected, or by which the facts asserted in them are to be accomplished. This important point is, in the most complete and exclusive sense, a discovery vouchsafed to man by direct communication from Heaven. It is a tenet lying quite out of the range of human philosophy. In *her* profoundest speculations, in *her* sublimest views, in *her* noblest excursions, it never became her lot so much as to catch a glimpse of it. That the soul, the thinking principle, is to survive the wreck of its earthly tabernacle, she formed some plausible, though uncertain and fluctuating conjectures, conjectures which, even in her own estimation, bore the character rather of a delightful vision—an Elysian dream, than of an established truth. But that the body, after being once deserted by its celestial resident; after having mouldered for ages, and incorporated by a gradual process of decomposition with its congenial dust, was again to be consolidated into a

human form, and awakened into life ; that, at a period yet remote, a resuscitating influence was to descend, and to rouse the sleeping ashes of mortality, was an idea that she never dimly conceived ; and hence we find, that when St. Paul brought forward this topic before an assembly of learned Athenians, it was treated with instant ridicule and contempt.

When, on another occasion, the Apostle felt himself called upon formally to vindicate this doctrine from the charge of absurdity and impossibility, which had been urged against it, he confirms its truth, indeed, by many powerful and convincing illustrative and analogical arguments. He leaves, however, a variety of particulars, most intimately connected with this amazing transaction, of which we are still in utter ignorance. While he gives a most sublime and luminous statement of the *fact*, he shows us what, in a considerable measure, is still “*a mystery.*” What will constitute the identity of the body that shall rise with the body that was deposited in the grave ; whether the re-animated frame will be composed of the same numerical particles of matter—an hypothesis exceedingly improbable, and, so far as we can judge, impossible ; or whether there be in the corporeal system a simple elemental principle, that will secure its sameness amidst all the fluctuations of other component parts ; whether, indeed, it be indifferent what parcel of dust will form the future body, provided it be united to the same soul, are points on which, however we may theorize, we can say nothing decisive. Even the nature of a body, that will be exempt from the ordinary laws of matter,

that will be free from every species of infirmity and disease, and will probably require no material sustenance, is to us a mystery as profound as any in the whole scheme of theology. But this interferes not in the least with our belief of the doctrine, as we have already endeavoured to show. The only question is, whether it be actually revealed; and as this will be denied by none in the present case, no doubt remains, whether it is to be adopted into our creed, and to be realized in our minds for the purpose of strengthening our faith, confirming our hope, and stimulating our diligence.

These and several other doctrines contained in the volume of inspiration, some of which will be noticed under our following head of observation, surpass the comprehension of Reason with respect to the precise modes and relations, which characterize them, and, therefore, do not properly come within her limits, as to the exercise of the power of rejection. They are *above* Reason, but not *contrary* to her dictates; and as it has been ascertained that they are revealed, the question determines itself, whether they are to be admitted as articles of faith.

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### SECTION III.

A DOCTRINE OF REVELATION NOT TO BE REJECTED BECAUSE IT MAY BE ATTENDED WITH DIFFICULTIES, WHICH REASON CANNOT SOLVE.

FINALLY, the jurisdiction of Reason in matters of Faith and of divine Revelation does *not* extend as far as that a doctrine should be rejected, merely be-



cause it may be *attended with difficulties which Reason cannot solve*. The distinction we would make between this and the last Remark is, that in *that* the difficulty consisted in the mere absence of light and information, and a correspondent power of understanding, while in the present it consists in the actual existence of apparent contradictions—of a seemingly opposite evidence. Hence it is, that while several doctrines of Revelation, though allowed to involve obscurities, which our mental eye cannot penetrate, are admitted without much hesitation—yet when any one of those which we would class under the latter description is proposed in terms equally clear and express to the same persons, it does not meet with the same cordial reception. And here it is obvious, that the doctrine of a threefold union of persons in the essence of Jehovah, and that of the no less mysterious union of the divine and human nature in the person of Christ, form the most prominent points of attention. To these doctrines, the wary, investigating, and, for the most part, self-sufficient mind, of the metaphysician and philosopher, has often been reluctant to yield his assent. Against these, the disputer of this world—whether he called himself a heathen or a Christian—a believer, or a free-thinker—has ever directed his mightiest artillery, and employed his carnal weapons with the most confident hope of success. It appears, that it was with difficulty, and not without considerable doubt, that Newton, with all his childlike simplicity—that Locke, with all his candour and his unquestionable love of truth—that Milton, with all his profound

reverence for holy scripture, and his anxiety to render all the rich exuberance of his devout imagination subservient to the illustration of its principles, prevailed upon themselves to recognize doctrines, so far as they distinctly recognized them at all, the depth of which their powerful genius was incapable of sounding\*. A modern division of professing Christians, which it is difficult to designate without offence, or without danger of an apparent compromise of truth, (for Socinian is, I believe, regarded by its members as a term of reproach, and, therefore, ought not to be wantonly attached to them; and Unitarian is an appellation, as expressive of a belief in one God, to which I do not conceive that they are entitled, inasmuch as other classes of Christians, with reference to the unity of the Divine Being, are as much Unitarians as themselves,) has made great boast of the authority of these distinguished individuals, as all resting on their side of the question. To say nothing of the illegitimate extent to which this assumption is carried, as it is difficult to say, with certainty, how far they severally went in their belief or disbelief in the doctrines under consideration,

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\* Reason could scarce sustain to see  
 The Almighty One—th' eternal Three,  
 Or bear the infant Deity.  
 Scarce could her pride descend to own  
 Her Maker stooping from his throne,  
 And dressed in glories so unknown.  
 A ransomed world, a bleeding God,  
 And Heaven appeased with flowing blood  
 Were themes too painful to be understood.

WATTS, on Locke's Annotations. *Lyric Poems.*

if, indeed, they had any settled and decided views at all upon these points, it assuredly indicates great weakness in a cause, when it requires to be propped by pillars of human authority. It reminds us of the vaunting decrees of the Romish conclave, whose members two or three centuries ago maintained the absurdities of a false philosophy, and resisted the early progress of truth, by a triumphant appeal to the authority of Aristotle and Aquinas, and other worthies of the Scholastic theology. It is delightful, indeed, to be able to range the great lights of science among those whose genius and learning illumine the bright firmament of revealed truth, when their recognition of that truth has been distinct and unequivocal. But to gather up the fragments of traditional hints, and of doubtful authorship, and to rear them into an imposing front, whether it be for the guardianship of truth, or the defence of error, is surely very much to overrate the importance which belongs to them. Of Newton it might be truly said, with an illustrious foreigner, that, in his own particular department of knowledge, it is seldom safe to contradict what he has positively asserted. But there may be some truth also in what another foreigner has said, that, in some of his theological writings, Newton has made amends unto mankind for his superiority to them in other respects. There is still more truth in what his own learned editor said of him, that in the science of quantity he was unequalled, but that in matters of religious inquiry he was but one of the people. It has been remarked by Gibbon, that the study of

the mathematics has a strong tendency, by the habits of thought which it induces, to incapacitate the mind for the nice perception and correct appreciation of moral evidence. It can be matter of just surprise to none, therefore, that a man, whose mighty faculties were so completely absorbed in the investigations of that science, as were those of Newton, should have failed to attain to a correct view of a system, whose evidence, from the very nature of the things, can never be made to assume the form of mathematical demonstration. A similar consideration would apply to Milton and Locke, and would account for any erroneous notion, or doubtful orthodoxy with respect to some of the great mysteries of godliness, which may display itself in some of their writings. The authority of the controversial theologian in both instances is lost—swallowed up in the one case by the imagination of the poet—sunk in the other into the profundity of the metaphysician. Of the views of Bacon, however, a man, to the originality and comprehensiveness of whose genius all names of modern or ancient celebrity must yield, we may speak with more certainty, inasmuch as he has left a confession of his faith upon record, in which he makes an unqualified acknowledgment of his belief in those doctrines, at which the mind is most apt to stagger\*. We mention these illustrious names, not

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\* "I believe that nothing is without beginning but God—no nature—no matter—no spirit—but one only and the same God. That God, as he is eternally almighty, only wise, only good in his nature, so He is eternally Father, Son and Spirit in persons."—*LORD BACON, Confession of faith.*

because we consider their opinion as at all decisive of the truth on either side of the question, but merely to show the reluctance with which Reason, in its highest state of cultivation and improvement, submits to the mysteries of godliness. In the contemplation of a truth so evidently transcending the efforts of a finite capacity, as that which relates to the nature and essence of the Deity, all human understandings are brought very nearly to a level\*. Perhaps, indeed, the acutest and most enlarged is most liable to be lost and bewildered, as the strongest sight, if it give occasion to a presumptuous and incautious gazing at the sun, is in greatest danger of being injured.

The leading, the ever-recurring argument which they who, we fear, would be wise above what is written, urge against a triplicity of personal subsistencies in the undivided essence of Jehovah, is, that such a notion is absolutely absurd, and contrary to the palpable dictates of common sense. Now, we have already laid it down, in a former part of this inquiry, that whenever a doctrine clearly and unquestionably obnoxious to this charge is proposed to our belief, it is the undoubted province of Reason to reject it. But it has never yet been proved, with whatever flippancy and triumph it may have been asserted, that this *is* the case with the doctrine under our present consideration.

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\* "One man may somewhat exceed another in physical power; but show me the man who can jump over a wall forty feet high."—SKELTON.

Before we can prove a proposition to be absurd, it is obvious that we must have a clear perception of the mutual relations of its component parts. If, for example, it was asserted, that two parallel lines would meet if prolonged to a certain point—we have an intuitive certainty, that this never *can* be the case, because we have an infallible evidence in our breast, that the mutual relation of these lines is such, that they never *can* meet. But if we beheld a certain number of lines running for a considerable distance separately from each other, and at length lost in a mist; if, moreover, we had no means of ascertaining with accuracy, whether they proceeded in a parallel, diverging, or approximating direction—nay, if to the very best of our judgment they appeared to be all exactly parallel, we could not prove it an absurdity, if we heard it asserted by credible testimony, that, at a remote point, they met together, like so many confluent streams, and formed but one line. Our duty under these circumstances would evidently be to admit the fact, and to acknowledge the fallacy of our previous conclusion, a conclusion founded upon the imperfection of our visual powers.

We readily allow, that the doctrine under consideration, may be proposed in such terms, and represented in such an order, as may imply an absolute contradiction; nor would we deny, that its maintainers sometimes view and express it in such an order. When, therefore, this mysterious tenet is formally stated in language which appears best adapted to scriptural phraseology—language, at the best, very



inadequate to the subject—its candid oppugners take the liberty of giving their own meaning to the terms employed, and are on the alert with an array of quibbling analogies, by which they pretend to prove its impossibility.

It requires no great depth of discernment to perceive, no very superior powers of argumentation to evince, that three distinct beings cannot constitute *one in the same sense, and in the same relation*, that they were separately One. If such a union of persons is what the champions of reason labour to disprove—if this is the shadow with which our adversaries contend, they may amuse themselves with much freedom; the defenders of the faith once delivered to the saints may willingly recede from the arena, and allow them the full enjoyment of their triumph, until they have learnt that the phantom which they had pursued with so much zeal, has never yet been embodied in the judgment of any man of common understanding.

But we may be asked, what do we understand by this doctrine, and how do we explain it, in consistency with sound reason and good sense? It is sometimes legitimate to reply to a question, by asking another. When the chief priests and elders of the Jews came to the Saviour, and asked, in reference to his miracles, “By what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?” He retorted upon them, by saying, “I will also ask you one thing, which, if ye tell me, I, in like manner, will tell you by what authority I do these things. The Baptism of John; whence was it? Of Heaven, or of men?”

Their reply was, "We cannot tell." In reference to the demand to explain what we understand by the doctrine just specified, we may also say to our querists—The principles of attraction and repulsion in the same mass of matter, what are they? The two polarities of the magnet; how are they to be accounted for? The positive and negative electricities; how are their causes to be explained? The infinite divisibility of matter and time and space; how is it to be rendered palpable to the apprehension, without the danger of a *reductio ad absurdum*? We strongly suspect, that their reply to these, and a hundred more questions relative to things which are believed, and yet very imperfectly understood, must be that of the Jewish high priests, "We cannot tell." But they will allege, in respect of these points, "We have the phenomena, and we profess not to go farther;" and so have we, the believer may answer. Our phenomena are the explicit statements of Him, who is the truth—of Him, who is no less true in his word, than He is in his works; and beyond these we do not venture to advance.

If, therefore, it be asked, what we *do* mean, when we speak of three persons subsisting in the essence of Jehovah, we frankly confess, without inquiring how far these terms are best calculated to express the truth, and without fear of compromising our cause, that there is in this scheme much that we do not understand, and something that, without a divine Revelation, we should have been inclined to controvert. But we have learnt that there is a difference between absurdity and obscurity, between the confined range of

our feeble Reason, and the boundless expanse of infinity; we know the fallibility of our own judgment: we rely on the unimpeachable veracity of the Author of our being. With these views and feelings, we believe that we can discover in the pages of Scripture a clear attestation to these two points, that there is *one* Supreme *infinite Jehovah*, indivisible and incomprehensible; and also that, in the essence of this great and glorious Being, there is a threefold distinction, which distinction is expressed in the Bible, by the terms of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The appellation of persons is adopted simply, because this word appears best suited to convey the idea of a real agent; but the order of combination, in which these two apparently discordant points coalesce, we do not profess to understand: we can form some idea of either, separately viewed, but how they harmoniously unite, we cannot perceive; just as we can frame some indistinct conception of the eternity that is past, and the eternity which is to come; but how both eternities, if we may use such a term, join together, so as to make one boundless circle of duration, unmarked by fore or after—by present, past, or future—one everlasting now—we cannot clearly comprehend. We are fully aware, indeed, that there is no analogy in nature, which can give a proper idea of this truth. Analogy, however, is no absolute test of truth, and we enter our decided protest against its being employed as such in the present instance. It is often of great use, indeed, in illustrating truth, and in vindicating it from the charge of folly and inconsistency, a use to which we have

endeavoured frequently to convert it in the course of these observations. “Solent tamen fallere similitudinum species”—said the Roman rhetorician—“ideoque adhibendum est his judicium.”

Analogy, thus fairly and legitimately employed, rather favours the reception of mysteries in religion than oppugns them, inasmuch as it points out such numberless mysteries in the whole economy of nature.

When we assert, on the authority of divine Revelation, as we are fully and deliberately convinced, that in the *one* essence of Jehovah there is a three-fold distinction of persons, mysteriously united with each other, we mean not that Jehovah is *One* precisely in the same sense as *He* is *three*, for this would imply, that one and three numerically amounted to the same quantity, an absurdity which an idiot can hardly fail to perceive. The instances, however, in which there is a unity in one sense and a plurality in another, are so numerous and apparent, that we surely need not particularly refer to many. Our own form of government supplies an example of this kind—one in its substantial and universal character, but threefold in its constituent parts, framed by a combination of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, each making a distinct element in the general power of administration. And we doubt not, that if an unlettered barbarian, who lived under the uncontrolled sway of a petty despot, were to be told that the government of England was decidedly *one ruling authority*—if again, he was to hear of the king pardoning criminals by an act of pure and unfettered

sovereignty, and appointing domestic officers and foreign delegates by a choice for which he was accountable to no man; and again, of the two houses of parliament conducting the affairs of state according to their respective rights—levying taxes—establishing and abrogating laws, with all the freedom apparently of independent bodies—he would find it as impossible to reduce what he conceived to be the discordant and heterogeneous rudiments of this triple scheme to a form of perfect unity, as we find it to reconcile the idea of a triplicity to a unity of essence in the infinite Jehovah. Let it, however, be distinctly understood, that the analogy here introduced is not intended so much to illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity, as to exemplify the obvious principle, that unity of character does not necessarily exclude a triplicity of component parts, though it may require more knowledge and understanding than is possessed in some cases, to perceive their perfect consistency. It is, in fact, quite out of our power to discover the sense in which unity of substance, and plurality of persons may or may not consist with each other, in the nature of the Divine Being, unless we had a clear and distinct idea of the whole of that nature, which few, it may be supposed, will have the presumption to maintain that we can have. To reject the doctrine that we have been briefly endeavouring to discuss, because it is attended with what have been shown to be mere difficulties, and not by any means contradictions, appears to militate against every dictate of wisdom, against every principle of sound reason. To prove this doctrine by citations from Scripture, we shall not

attempt, nor do we deem it necessary. The many passages which we view as decisive on this point, we cannot suppose to be unknown, or otherwise than familiar to our opponents, without ascribing to them a measure of ignorance, which *they* would, perhaps, consider as disgraceful, as we think their rejection of the evidence which these passages afford, to be unhappy. Our business, at present, is not so much to confirm the truth of any particular doctrines as to establish principles, by which our judgment of doctrines should be governed; and on this ground we shall decline entering upon a more particular consideration of those other doctrines with which Reason is generally considered as more especially concerned. If, in the progress of these remarks, we have, with some tolerable accuracy, marked out the boundaries, both in respect of liberty and restraint which should limit the operations and the researches of Reason, in estimating the truth of Revelation, our purpose has been fully accomplished. If we have been enabled, in some degree, to teach that noble faculty what measure of light and knowledge it is her duty and her privilege to require, and with what she ought to rest satisfied in our investigations, our design has been answered. What has been said in illustration of one doctrine may with ease be applied to another.

Such a sober, chastised, and limited exercise of Reason as has been here recommended and defined, appears to be of great importance on this as well as on other grounds,—that it will prove an effectual preservative against enthusiasm, superstition, and credulity on the one hand, and against the baneful



influence of a proud, self-sufficient, and sceptical philosophy on the other. It is calculated to produce a general firmness, consistency, and humility of character—to regulate the judgment without damping the ardour of the affections—to enlighten the head without petrifying the heart. Discarding every thing that is inconsistent and absurd, every thing that is vague and illusive, it secures a clearness of conception, a harmony, a simplicity, and decisive conviction of mind; admitting nothing without suitable evidence, it establishes belief upon a solid basis; not excluding mysteries, it affords an expansive range to the vigorous efforts of the understanding. While it checks the presumptuous intrusions of a prying fancy, it discourages not the well regulated flights of a sublime imagination; while it banishes every wild, chimerical, and legendary notion, it reposes a calm and delightful confidence in the declarations of the God of truth. Reason thus exercised, renouncing the low, mean, and contemptible character of a quibbler and a railer against truths which it does not understand, and was never meant to understand, is elevated into devotion, is sublimated into faith.

We would merely add, as we draw these observations to a close, that as the benefits calculated to result from a just and legitimate use of Reason, are great and important; so the evils springing from the neglect or the undue application of it are grievous and often fatal. Through the first of these faults, the unqualified rejection of the aid of Reason in investigating the truths of Revelation, the most visionary schemes have been invented and zealously

propagated—theories, the most senseless, groundless, and extravagant, have been adopted and cherished. Men have believed the most fanciful and unmeaning conceits, with the same blind and pitiable credulity, that the South Americans received the orders of the man, who pretended to act under a commission from the sun. To perceive the danger of an unnatural mixture of reason and philosophy with the mysterious parts of divine Revelation, we have only to view its effects in the case of different individuals, and in the various ages of the church. It appears, that this mischievous association had begun to corrupt the purity and to destroy the simplicity of the Christian faith, in some instances, even in the Apostolic age. For, we find St. Paul earnestly exhorting the Colossian Christians, that they should be established in the faith, and not suffer themselves to be spoiled through philosophy and vain deceit. At subsequent periods in the history of primitive Christianity, the danger against which the Apostle delivers this pointed and affectionate warning, was realized to a lamentable extent. Even the pious and devoted Justin Martyr does not appear to have wholly escaped the infection. His scholastic habits, and his original profession as a heathen philosopher, gave a tinge to the character of his mind, and consequently to the productions of his pen, by no means favourable to the unadulterated purity of the Gospel, and far from congenial with the transparent perspicuity of truth.

After him, the learned and laborious Origen, as well as the disciples of the Eclectic School in general, poisoned the springs of divine knowledge to a still

more grievous extent, by an admixture of the same error. Actuated in many cases, doubtless, by the laudable desire of conciliating their learned contemporaries among the heathen, they proceeded to an undue length in lowering the mysteries of faith to a level with the speculations of reason—in assimilating, by a species of moral alchemy, the doctrines of Christ to the lucubrations of Plato.

From that period to the present time, excepting those ages in which the face of Europe, and of the civilized world was wrapped in a veil of ignorance and midnight gloom, and no one inquired what he believed, or why he believed it, a tendency to abolish mysteries from the scheme of revealed truth, and to reduce it altogether to a meagre set of speculative and ethical axioms, has been the bane of the rashly inquisitive and superficially learned. Assuming the honourable name of free and liberal thinking, this petulant humour has blasted with its malignant influence many an active and vigorous mind, whose energies might have otherwise been advantageously employed in developing the principles of piety, and in extending the dominions of truth. To this, as its natural parent, must be ascribed that spectrous form of Christianity, which, though possessed of neither warmth, nor life, nor wisdom, its patrons represent as the daughter of light—as the good genius sent down from heaven to banish ignorance and superstition from the earth, and in time to regenerate the world.

To this also, however little it may be suspected, and however strenuously it may be denied, are to be traced the bold and unwarrantable assertions of a

rank supralapsarianism. To this, in fact, is to be attributed every attempt to systematize beyond what the word of God has clearly authorized—to bring down the high purposes of heaven to a scale co-ordinate with the human capacity.

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## BOOK II.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE  
FACULTY OF VOLITION, AS CONNECTED WITH MORAL  
AGENCY AND RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS.

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### PART I.

HOW FAR MAN IS TO BE CONSIDERED AS FREE IN HIS  
VOLITIONS.

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#### SECTION I.

THE CHOICE OF SIMPLE TENDENCY AS DISPLAYED IN MATERIAL  
SUBSTANCES.

THE first thing, probably, that strikes a contemplative and reflecting mind, and fills it with astonishment and awe, when it has withdrawn from the tumult and agitation of surrounding scenes, is the fact that something exists. Some persons may recollect a period in early life, when, without having heard anything of the reasonings and demonstrations of philosophers upon this question, their own thoughts were strangely exercised and perplexed, and ran into very curious speculations upon it. Such individuals, indeed, may not have proceeded, according to the strict logical method of Des Cartes, to reason out their own existence, and that of the universe at large from the conscious operations of their own minds—*Cogito, ergo sum*. But viewing themselves and the various objects



around them as actually existing, and forgetting for the moment the clear and distinct disclosures of divine Revelation, they have been greatly at a loss to account unto themselves for a scene of things so wonderful and mysterious. They have speculated in eager and bewildering inquiry:—What is its real substance? What was its origin, if it originated at all, and what is to be its final destiny? We know no exercise of mind, which is more delightful than thus to gather up the faint recollections of those inquiries, which first engaged the unsophisticated mind. In such an order of mental phenomena there will be found problems and hypotheses, not only interesting to remember and amusing in the retrospect, but likewise sometimes involving the profoundest and most difficult points of investigation in the whole range of human thought.

When the existence of a universe has thus been noticed, the next thing which seems to claim the attention is the ceaseless motion—the diversified operation of parts upon parts, that is going on in this amazing scene. The whole system of nature appears full of life, and energy, and activity. It resembles, at first view, some immense machine, constructed by a hand of consummate skill, and exhibiting every wheel as performing its appropriate function. It is this part of the subject, indeed, that has embarrassed philosophical inquirers, unenlightened and uninstructed from above, in every age of the world. It was the origination of motion, which the ancients always considered as that which most clearly proved and demonstrated the existence of a Supreme Being.

This justly appeared the *Deo dignus vindice nodus*—the fact, which absolutely required divine interference, in order to be satisfactorily explained. It is in the futile endeavour to account for this phenomenon, by giving the atomic particles a native tendency to move downward, that the Epicurean philosophy, as expounded by Lucretius, fails most grievously. Independently of the error, fatal and destructive to all sound reasoning, which this notion involves,—that of introducing an effect, upon the varied modifications of which the whole system depends, without an adequate cause,—it is not considered by those, by whom it is advanced, that upward and downward are altogether relative terms, intended to express the motion or position of objects with reference to other objects already existing and maintaining a uniform local direction; but that, in infinite space, where there was no central or gravitating point, where ascending, descending, progressive, or oblique motion could, as such, have no place, such a supposed tendency must be altogether nugatory and unmeaning. Although, therefore, contrary to what we know, and involving, as the hypothesis does, the most insuperable difficulties, we should suppose, with Aristotle, and, indeed, most of the ancients, that the matter of the universe has existed from eternity, in the way of a necessary emanation from Him, who spread his line over the dark confusion, and reduced it to harmony and order; still the life which animates, and the motion which pervades and agitates the whole system, would be utterly unaccounted for. There is found at work throughout the whole mass, and in every department of the uni-

verse, an active force combined and proportioned with the most perfect accuracy, and working with the most astonishing precision, so that art, with her utmost ingenuity, in arranging a few of the mechanical powers, can only make some faint approaches to the uniformity of nature, when left to her own spontaneous operations. There is nothing in matter, considered merely as a mass of solidity and extension, which can give rise to the least suspicion, that motion, in such precise directions, and in such exact proportions of velocity, can have originally belonged to it as such; and this circumstance, in connexion with the collocation of the elements, as Chalmers has well remarked, and those appearances of unquestionable design, which the universe presents, forms the main argument of natural religion for the existence of a Supreme Being.

But amidst all the variety and multiplicity of the motions and operations which are thus carrying on in the created universe, they may all be divided into two kinds, and considered as flowing from either of two immediate and direct causes. They may all be regarded as either mechanical or voluntary—either as resulting from some hidden quality or force, originally impressed by the Creator upon matter, or as proceeding from that peculiar modification of mental action in living agents, called the exercise of the will. These two originators of motion, in their general character and mode of operation, are, indeed, as clear and palpable as any two causes or effects can possibly be. The merest child understands the difference between a motion or an effect produced by an

intelligent and voluntary agent, and that occasioned by mechanical impulse and blind, undesigning force. But clearly to understand the nature, and to mark out the limits of each of these modes of action, and to point out, in some minute instances, the exact line of demarcation by which they are respectively distinguished and separated from each other, is a far more difficult task.

In this universal system of action and reaction, it is therefore an inquiry in the highest degree interesting and important, what kinds of operations are to be considered as voluntary, and what as mechanical or physically necessary. Upon this distinction, viewed in its various bearings, is founded the whole question of liberty and moral agency—a question, which has always been considered as one of the most difficult and perplexing in the whole range of human investigation. To those who view the matter superficially, indeed, it might appear a very palpable and adequate distinction, that the one order of effects belongs to the inanimate part of the creation, and the other to that which is endued with life, and some faculty of thought and volition. And as a broad outline of the bare phenomena, this might undoubtedly be correct and sufficient. But to those who enter deeper into the subject, and penetrate beyond the bare exterior of the question, it will at once appear, that it is by no means so clear and definite, and free from perplexity, as the first aspect of it would intimate. It will be seen by such, especially after the conflicting theories and hypotheses, by which philo-

sophers and theologians of different schools have embarrassed this naturally intricate inquiry, that it is by no means so easy to determine, how far, and in what sense, those actions, usually termed voluntary or elective, differ in their real mode of production or causation from those which are mechanical; and, on the other hand, how far living agency, if not mental volition, may be concerned in many of those effects which are generally regarded as the results of mechanical or physical necessity. It will be found, in many cases, that these two modes of agency and operation so run into each other, as that it is almost impossible to define their precise limitations. Like the colours of the rainbow, they are palpable and easily distinguishable in the general aspect which they present, but in their connecting lines they become almost imperceptibly merged into each other. We cannot help thinking, however, that much of the perplexity of this question, so far as it relates to the accountableness and the practical obligations of man, has arisen from a love of theorizing, and from an attempt to reduce one order of phenomena, under a system of operation and arrangement belonging to another order entirely different, and to which the former bears no more than a general analogy. In the following inquiry, it will be our endeavour to keep as closely as possible to acknowledged phenomena, or to modes of operation which must be universally recognized as characterizing the exercises of *volition* in the human mind—noticing the various contradictory systems which have been advanced upon this subject, only so

far as may appear necessary for the vindication or illustration of the truth. The order in which we shall pursue this important investigation, in accordance with the general method observed in this work, will be, first, to point out what is *essential* to the liberty of moral agency—or, in what sense and to what extent, man, as a rational and accountable being, is *free*; and then to show in what sense, and to what extent, man is *not free*—in what respect he is to be regarded as a *necessary agent*, without in any degree interfering with his character as a responsible creature. And if these points can be satisfactorily determined, and the limits within which the exercises of the faculty of *volition* are carried on be definitely ascertained, then, at least, the difficulties of this abstruse subject, so far as they relate to the responsibility of man, and the necessary influence of the grace of God, will have been in a great measure relieved. *Ultimate* facts, for which no reason can be given, except the wise and benevolent and all-powerful will of the Supreme Disposer of all things, will still remain, indeed, attached to this, as well as every other question of human investigation. But so far as we proceed, we shall feel confident and secure; and upon those points which transcend our present capacity, or are concealed from our view in the depths of an impenetrable mystery, we must wait for the manifestations of a brighter world. At present we may truly say, with reference to our keenest insight into the physical and moral system, as well as into the scenes of glory and blessedness hereafter, that “we



see but through a glass darkly." We can do little else than notice a few of the more palpable movements, trace the revolutions of the most superficial wheels, and estimate the relations of a few of the more obvious and approachable springs of the stupendous machinery, from the operations of which such astonishing effects continue to evolve themselves; but the original and ultimate arrangements, in every department of our inquiries and observations, are removed from us to an immensity of distance, or involved in a complication and intricacy of mutual subserviency and adaptation, which renders them wholly imperceptible to our eye, or utterly baffles our comprehension. We enter upon this part of our investigations with no overweening confidence of complete success, but with an humiliating sense of the absolute necessity of resting in those few general principles and facts relating to our mental faculties—especially to that, the exercises and operations of which we are now preparing to investigate—beyond which, it does not appear to be the privilege of man here below to pass.

With reference to the exercises of volition, we have represented them as characterized by an elective process—as accompanied with choice or preference, in opposition to those actions or motions, which are the result of external impulse or mechanical force. *That* action is unquestionably voluntary, whatever imaginary necessity may belong to it, which is done spontaneously, and is accompanied with a feeling of desire, complacence and satisfaction. As in the functions of *life*, with which the exercises of volition

appear to be very intimately connected, there is a scale of gradations carried on from its lowest manifestations in vegetable organization and expansion, through the various stages of the zoophytic and locomotive tribes, until it has arrived at the highest point of perfection, in which it is displayed here on earth; so in the elective process—in those actions, which appear to involve obvious preference, there is a similar order of arrangement. In inanimate nature, we find very frequent instances of operations which bear a very strong analogy, and would seem, in many respects, to be closely allied to the exercises of the human will. We find numerous actions and reactions among material elements of various kinds, which are scarcely explicable upon the mere principles of mechanical impulse or external power. We witness the most striking effects produced upon each other, by bodies removed to a considerable distance from all possibility of tactual operation or connexion—effects strongly indicating a spontaneity of movement and action correspondent to those results, which flow from the instinctive inclination or the rational will in animate beings. We may consider, therefore, the elective process, like the vital principle, as extending through a long scale—originating where it is scarcely perceptible or determinable, and acting with greater vigour and perfection as it advances, until it has reached its terminating point in intellectual preference, and the exercise of the liberty of Moral Agency in man.

It is interesting to traverse this scale with the eye of observation from what we may consider as its

commencing point, its lowest extremity, in the election of *simple native tendency*—to its loftiest point in the exercise of free and unfettered Moral Agency. Under that modification of preference, which we have called simple tendency, we may rank the whole range of magnetic influences—chemical affinities—material attraction, and the interesting phenomena of crystallization. Who can witness the curious, and, in many instances, utterly inexplicable effects of magnetism and electricity, without being struck with the very great resemblance which they frequently bear to the functions of conscious volition? When we see the magnet or the magnetized steel attracting and repelling, with unaccountable tendency and apparent caprice, objects, with which they do not come in contact, and with which they can have no direct communication, except through the medium of intervening atmosphere or some imperceptible substance, are we not ready to conclude, that there is here an actual expression, both of choice and aversion, as related to either the attracting or the repelling pole? When again, we see the paper images dance in sportive motions, and raising their uplifted hands under the action of the electric fluid, we can scarcely fail to be impressed with the momentary illusion, that here there is a modification of life and volition; and we are ready to think, with John Hunter and his disciples, that the vital principle is very nearly akin, if not absolutely identical, with electricity\*. When, in chemistry again, we behold the apparent eagerness

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\* Vide ABERNETHY'S *Lectures*, Lect. 6.

and avidity with which different elements hasten to escape from their present state of combination, and to enter into new alliances, and to form fresh compounds—when we see how soon the strongest and most solid plates of iron will yield their superficial particles, in order to form an oxide with the oxygen of the air, and the plates of copper and zinc so rapidly corroded by the acid in the interstices of the galvanic trough, we feel certain, at least, that there is a very strong display of spontaneous action. The process of crystallization affords likewise a most remarkable specimen of an inherent tendency to choose a particular position and arrangement with respect to other associated component parts. However this curious phenomenon may be attempted to be explained upon principles of mechanism, and by a consideration of the peculiar form and structure of the globules, which constitute the crystallized mass, it still remains clear, that there is an inherent and native tendency in those particles to enter into this peculiar order of combination and juxtaposition. This principle of a spontaneous tendency to attraction or repulsion—this exercise of preference with respect to other objects and surrounding parts, seems, indeed, to pervade the whole system of nature. It is this which preserves, in a state of aggregation and cohesion, the innumerable particles which constitute the various masses of unorganized matter—it is this, which occasions the solidity of the diamond, as well as maintains in a state of loose and more soluble composition, the most brittle or spongy body in nature. It is this quality of an original

elective tendency to move in a certain direction—to attract towards a certain point, operating on a large and extensive scale, which retains the planets in their orbits, and controls the luminaries of the skies.

Considering these points, it seems to be a groundless and altogether inadequate view of matter as such, to regard it as a mere inert substance, solid and extended—destitute of all active power, except a susceptibility of motion from the application of external and foreign force. Matter, indeed, in the first and superficial view of it, may appear a mere mass of quiescent and inactive substance. But it is perfectly obvious, at the same time, on the least consideration, that those heaps of matter, which would appear most motionless and inert, are not by any means in a state of absolute quietude. Some process of combination or decomposition, of reproduction or decay—either of them equally involving and evincing qualities distinct from, and indeed inconsistent with, absolute inertness—will be found, though perhaps slowly and imperceptibly, to be still carrying on. It is saying nothing in reply to this remark, to affirm, that these changes are produced by the action of other bodies—that iron, for example, is oxidated by the action of atmospheric air; for, is it not at once obvious, that an active power is attributed in this very instance to what is in itself nothing more than a body? Air, even in its highest state of fluidity and elasticity—nay, the inconceivably tenuous æther, to the operation of which some of the followers of Newton ascribe the phenomena of gravitation, is as much and as perfectly matter,

as the dullest clod of earth. And if matter is to be considered as universally and essentially an inert and inactive substance, how is it possible that its elements, when in a state of peculiar arrangement and juxtaposition, should exhibit motive phenomena, and be attended with unquestionable evidences of active energy? When we look around us, and

See through this air, this ocean and this earth,  
All matter quick and bursting into birth—

when we contemplate the various effects which are produced through the sole agency of matter in its different modifications of operation, such as those of magnetism, electricity, deflagration, and attraction, how is it possible that we should maintain a notion so groundless and absurd, as that matter is nothing more than a mere aggregate of inert particles, utterly destitute of every quality of motivity and action? Whether the powers, indeed, productive of these remarkable effects, essentially and inseparably belong to matter, so as in a manner to form a part of it, or whether they be qualities and energies superinduced upon its original substance, is what we can no more determine, than we can determine whether thought and volition be essential constituents of the substance called *mind*. All that we can positively know is, that as mind in some circumstances speculates, wills, loves, hopes, fears, and hates, so matter in certain circumstances, and in some of its forms, attracts, repels, combines, dissolves, precipitates, electrifies and burns, without the intervention of any other force than that which results from its native capabilities. And the pecu-



liar direction, in which these original or superinduced energies act, seems to occupy the lowest rank in that Elective Process, in that graduated scale of preference, by which the spontaneous actions of all beings are regulated, and which is exhibited in its highest order in the liberty and moral agency of rational and accountable intelligences.

It may here be expedient to observe, that the preceding observations upon the inherent activity of matter, have nothing whatever to do with the system of materialism, as related to the human mind. Activity or motive power and sensation, accompanied with a faculty of volition, are phenomena perfectly distinct from, though strikingly analogous to one another. It would, therefore, be an utter paralogism to reason from the first of these phenomena, unto either of the two last. We are of opinion, that motivity or energetic power, requiring only to be called into action by a suitable arrangement or collocation of parts, and to be accounted for only by considering it an effect of the original design of the Deity, pervades all nature. Whether this energy exists in matter, as consisting of living monads, according to the notion of Leibnitz; or whether, according to other systems of philosophy, it be the result of a subtile ethereal fluid, pervading all matter; or an immediate quality belonging to the very *being* of it; or whether, as others suppose, it be a continued exercise of the direct power of God himself, we have no means of ascertaining. But that such phenomena do evolve themselves in the operations of simple matter, as to give evident indication of a

peculiarity of tendency, strikingly similar to the exercises of volition in sentient and intellectual beings, is unquestionable. The illustrious Kepler, indeed, went so far as to consider "the globe itself as possessed of living faculties. According to him it contains a circulating vital fluid. A process of assimilation goes on in it as well as in animal bodies. Every particle of it is alive." Without, however, proceeding to the length of this profound but fanciful philosopher, we deem it unquestionable, that the constituent elements of the material world are very far from being a mere congeries of inert and torpid particles, but that they possess, when placed in suitable combination and arrangement, a capability of motion and action closely analogous to a principle of vitality.

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## SECTION II.

### SENSITIVE PREFERENCE—THE NEXT STAGE IN THE ELECTIVE PROCESS.

NEXT to the act of simple Tendency, manifesting itself in the operations of material nature, and occupying the lowest extremity in the scale of the elective process, which we have mentioned, is to be regarded that of *sensitive Preference*, peculiar to sentient beings. We have already specified many instances of evident, though unconscious choice in the exercise of the inherent powers of material agents. But there are other preferences of a higher order, exercised by other classes of beings, and

accompanied with the very important circumstance of a lively desire or emotion, but still coming short of what we usually mean, when we speak of volition as an exercise of the faculties of rational and intelligent agents. It may, indeed, be difficult to determine the line of demarcation which separates mere sensitive propensity from a preference or predilection, guided by some reasoning views of the desirableness of the object preferred. It would be difficult to decide at what link in the great chain of animated creation, blind impulse, guided by no other principle than a strong instinctive emotion, ends, and where a considerate view of the advantages connected with the attainment of the object, to which the active energies are directed, begins to blend its influence. Between the propelling principles themselves, however, there is a very clear and obvious difference, and they may unquestionably act quite apart from each other, and even occasionally in direct opposition, when both are capable of being exercised. In man, for example, in whose character the exercises of volition are susceptible of influence, from both quarters,—that of mere sensitive feeling and a rational view of his best interests, how frequently do we find these grounds and principles of choice militate against each other! How often has the scene, so graphically described by Persius, been realized in human life, when the views of interest suggested by the calculating powers of the mind urge to one line of pursuit, and passion dictates another.

Mane, piger, stertis? Surge, inquit Avaritia; eja  
 Surge: Negas? Instat; surge, inquit. Non queo. Surge.  
 Et quid agam? Rogitas? Saperdas advehe ponto,  
 Castoreum, stuppas, hebenum, thus, lubrica Coa.  
 Tolle recens primus piper e sitiēte camelo.  
 Verte aliquid. Jura. Sed Jupiter audiet. Eheu!  
 Baro, regustatum digito terebrare salinum  
 Contentus perages, si vivere cum Jove tendis.

*Sat. v. 132—140.*

The whole range of animated nature abounds with exhibitions of that species of elective propensity which we are now considering. Indeed, it may be doubted, whether the whole class of what are called instinctive feelings and habits, as well as most of the unconscious motions of the muscular and nervous systems in animals—we mean unconscious, so far as that there is no deliberate exercise of the mental apprehension, every time such an action takes place—may not be ranged under this head. In the selection of their food, in the construction of their habitations, in the dexterous application of their various means of defence against violence, and of offensive assault; in the remarkable provision which they make against a period of inactivity and want, and in the consummate skill which they display in the arrangement of their stores, in their care of their young, and in the astonishing sagacity, tenderness and affection with which they adapt the whole system of treatment, and watch over the course of their education, animals of different ranks and species evince indications of *choice* accompanied with tokens of feeling, which it would be as absurd to attribute to mere mechanical action, or simple tendency, as has sometimes been maintained, on the one hand, as it would probably be, on the

other, to ascribe them to the suggestions of a deliberative and designing mind. In other views of their nature, this rank of creatures by no means appears to be endued with a mind capable of embracing within the sphere of its reasonings and combinations, the whole chain of relations and subserviencies—of causes and effects—of principles and consequences, that the work in which they are engaged, in order to be planned with such unerring accuracy, would unquestionably appear to involve. In the mechanism of the human frame also—in the disposition of its parts, and in the exercise of its powers, there are various actions which almost incessantly take place under the influence of mere sensation, without any immediate and perceptible intervention of the rational or intellectual faculties. All such modes of instinctive operation are to be considered as so many exemplifications of that sensitive preference, which occupies, as it were, a middle space in the elective process, between that of unsentient nature, and that of rational volition. And to the consideration of this last, as standing uppermost in that graduated scale of preference, which the phenomena of nature seem to present, we shall next proceed.

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### SECTION III.

#### RATIONAL CHOICE.

THE subject of our present investigation, therefore, we may define *Rational Choice*—a preference founded upon, and influenced by, *motives* suggested by the

understanding in the exercise of its deliberative and judicial functions. To this mode of exercising choice, we usually give the name of Volition; and the faculty, which is considered as capacitating the mind for this peculiar modification of feeling, is called the *Will*. This species of elective agency is peculiar to man alone, of all the creatures with the functions of which we are acquainted, as an intelligent and responsible being. It is, therefore, justly regarded as the foundation of the whole system of the liberty of moral agency. For, although the elective preferences already noticed may, in a certain sense, be considered as free, inasmuch as they are not the effects of external force, or the results of a necessitating constraint, in which the electing subjects exerted no inherent power or quality of their own, yet they were not free in such a sense as to be the ground of responsibility and moral agency. This latter, and by far the most important, species of liberty, necessarily requires reason and intellect as a guiding and controlling power. What then is *that* principle or combination of principles, which essentially constitutes the liberty of moral agency? And how far, within what limitations, and upon what grounds, may we regard man in the present state, as enjoying this distinguishing privilege? These are questions of no ordinary importance; and with a view to the solution of them, so far as we have reason to think that they are capable of being solved, we would lay down two or three first principles, which are essential to the exercise of rational volition and the enjoyment of moral liberty.



## SECTION IV.

## THE POSSESSION OF LIFE—AN ESSENTIAL REQUISITE TO MORAL LIBERTY.

1. WE would lay it down as a first principle—as an indispensable requisite to the exercise of rational volition and the enjoyment of moral liberty, that the subject of this species of agency be possessed of *Life*. We are of opinion, indeed, that the possession of this peculiar principle in man is more closely and necessarily connected with the functions of the Will than has generally been noticed. It has already been observed, that so far as we are capable of tracing the analogy of this faculty, through the inferior ranks of being, it invariably implies the existence of motive energy as naturally inherent in, or divinely attached to, the beings in which it is manifested. The strength and capabilities of this power, as fundamental to the elective process, must obviously be correspondent to the rank which its subject was intended to occupy in the scale of nature, and to the peculiar mode in which its acts of preference are to be exercised. The chemical or magnetic energy, for example, in the exercise of which bodies attract or repel each other, sink into the embrace of each other in the recognition of an original tendency to affinity or combination, or rapidly decompose in evaporation or combustion, is something very different, at least in its effects, if not in its real nature, from that calm display of vital activity, which is no less clearly displayed in the progressive development, growth

and organization of the vegetable system. In its latter form it may be wholly extinct, after which it may exert itself in the former with increased vigour. Life, indeed, in animals and vegetables, is the grand antagonist to that process of active decomposition, which, subsequently to its extinction or its destruction in that mode of its exercise, invariably takes place. But different as the life of vegetation and organization may be from those other manifestations of active energy, which nature, as a system of chemical elements, universally displays, the difference between these is by no means so great as that by which they are both separated from sensitive or animal life. And in proportion to the difference in the nature or developement of the vital principle, in these classes of being is the difference, which marks their respective agencies in the exercises of preference or volition. The volitions of an animal, even of the lowest tribe, for instance, owing to the superinduction of sensation to mere locomotive power and plastic energy, are as superior to the physical tendencies and elective preferences of the various objects of inanimate nature—using the term inanimate as simply designative of the destitution of a capacity of thought and feeling—as the life of the former is higher and more extensive in its capabilities than that of the latter.

In tracing the scale of nature, we find that every being, that has life or active energy, requiring only a suitable arrangement of circumstances to be called into exercise, has also native tendencies, which are either actual volitions, or are obviously analogous

to volitions, and can, indeed, be hardly regarded otherwise than as modifications of choice. And if we consider any form of being utterly destitute of this principle of vitality in its largest and most comprehensive sense, it is impossible to conceive such a being as capable, in any degree, or in any imaginable modification, of exerting a will, or manifesting an inclination. It seems, therefore, inevitably to follow, that as, without life in some one or other of its graduated modifications, there can be no exercise of choice—no display of native propensity swayed by external circumstances, so where life exists, there cannot fail to be tendencies, rising, in co-ordinate gradations, towards rational volition and the exercise of moral agency as manifested in the character of man, with the endowments and capacities, by which the subject is distinguished. Although, therefore, life—viewed simply as a principle of motivity and energy—does not involve the exercise of rational volition and the responsibility of moral liberty, yet the latter mode of agency does unquestionably imply the possession of the former in a higher order of native capabilities. The life, by which man is capacitated for the enjoyment of a rational and accountable liberty, is, indeed, transcendently superior to that principle which qualifies a chemical element to combine with another element, and to that higher principle, which causes a vegetable to grow and to acquire a regularly-organized form; to that even, which instinctively prompts or sensitively urges the various ranks of the lower animals to choose one species of food in preference to another, and to exert

the numberless propensities, of which they are obviously susceptible. Let us not, therefore, be supposed to confound man as a being endued with the power of volition with other orders of creatures, which manifest, indeed, a similar, but by no means identical, susceptibility, while we maintain the universality of the vital principle in some of its endlessly diversified forms.

The fact is, that the animating principle by which man is qualified to be a subject of volition is as different from the same principle, as it exists in other creatures, as his responsibilities are greater, his capacities of enjoyment superior, and his destinies more sublime. It is quite absurd, therefore, to suppose that any specific circumstance connected with life in its lower and less perfect forms, can lead to any legitimate conclusion respecting the same principle in an order of nature, in which qualities and endowments totally distinct and incomparably superior are found to belong to it. We have found that a principle of activity analogous to life, may inhere in matter, in a manner completely independent of structure and organization of parts, which arrangement, indeed, is considered essential to it in its form of a vegetative vitality. How little reason is there to conclude then—how contrary, indeed, to all analogy is it to suppose, that in its higher rank of a rational and intellectual, as well as a sensitive and plastic principle, it should ever be annihilated, or cease to exist.

The connexion of life with the faculty of volition and the functions of moral agency in man is evident

from the order of his creation and his constitution as an accountable being. When the material frame had been completed—when the organic structure had been prepared for the reception of its future inmate, and for those actions which it was designed subordinately and instrumentally to perform, it is said, that “God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” It was by this process of animation, that man became capable of volition, and the fact of his having been made after the *image* of God would seem prominently to imply and to hold out this among other important points, that he now received a faculty of originating and directing his own motions, analogous to that which is possessed by Jehovah himself, and by the due government of which he might secure his own happiness and well being. This view of a delegated and communicated power does not in the slightest degree interfere with the absolute dependence of man upon his Maker; for it affirms nothing as possessed by the creature, which he did not immediately receive from the Creator, and some discretionary power he must have received in order to constitute him a moral agent; otherwise, how could he be accountable for the abuse of what he had never received? *Life*, therefore, may be regarded as a first principle—as a fundamental and indispensable requisite to a moral agent, to a being capable of exerting rational volition.

## SECTION V.

A SUSCEPTIBILITY OF ENJOYMENT AND SUFFERING—THE NEXT  
FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE TO RATIONAL LIBERTY.

2. As another fundamental principle of rational liberty, as a ground without which it cannot be exercised, we would mention *a susceptibility of Enjoyment and Suffering*—associated with an order of circumstances, from which the one or the other would necessarily rise, from the direction which the faculty of volition gave to the character and conduct. Without such a capability of painful or pleasurable feeling superadded to mere life, and without a state of things adapted to call it into action, there can be no just and adequate ground for the exercise of such a power as that of volition. Without a view of happiness in some of its varied forms, as connected with a certain order of pursuits, as appointed to arise from a certain line of conduct followed under circumstances, the multiplicity of whose combinations afforded an opportunity of verging into a great variety of directions, there would be no intelligible ground of preference, in which the very essence of volition consists. Nor is it enough that the subject of volition should be merely susceptible of happiness. It is equally necessary to the due exercise of this faculty, that, as a moral and responsible agent, he should be capable of a sensation of pain and suffering. We find, indeed, that even the lower animals, whose faculty of combination does not extend far to the future or the past, and, therefore, fails to qualify



them for moral agents, yet so far as they are at all capable of exerting a voluntary choice, and of being made the subjects of discipline, are entirely urged and swayed and controlled in their preferences by this very susceptibility. That creatures of this order have a faculty of willing one thing rather than another is unquestionable, and that they are capable of being trained up by a system of discipline, directed to their natural capacities of pleasure and pain, to a most extraordinary degree of docility, sagacity, and tractableness, is equally undeniable. And we find that, in every system of human education, which has for its main object the regulation and control of the yet wayward and unsettled tendencies of the Will, it is the appeal by varied means to this same original susceptibility, which constitutes the ground-work of the process, and gives energy to every other subordinate means.

We are so thoroughly convinced of the absolute necessity of this order of character to the exercise of volition, and to moral agency, as combined with that exercise, that we cannot conceive the highest rank of created beings otherwise than thus circumstanced. We are, indeed, but little acquainted with the economy of angels; our general view of their character and condition is a floating notion, that they are an order of beings endowed with most sublime and transcendant powers—possessed of the most perfect and unsullied purity—glowing with the most intense and fervent love to that great and glorious Being, in the rays of whose resplendent light, and in the warmth of whose overflowing be-

neficence, they dwell in the fulness of delight, and thus eternally removed from all liability to pain or sorrow. That this may be as clear and correct a view of their actual state, as we are capable of forming with our present imperfect information, we may, indeed, be willing to concede; but if we are to regard them as moral agents, dependent for the continuance of their felicity upon the continuance of their obedience, their loyalty, and their affection; if we are to view them as a race of intelligent and rational beings, swayed by motives, and enjoying the highest possible privilege which beings of this order seem capable of enjoying—that of unshackled liberty in the choice of their chief good, we can by no means imagine that there is any other impossibility of suffering connected with their character, than their confirmed and established choice of what they know to be most conducive to their happiness. We have no ground whatever to think otherwise than that their clear and distinct view of what would be the inevitable effect upon their happiness of an opposite line of conduct—a view awfully confirmed by the dismal fate of their fallen companions, is one of the strongest and most efficient means of their inviolable and undeviating attachment to the right. We do not know but that the overthrow of the apostate host was designed, in the wise and beneficent purposes of Jehovah, to operate in the way of a salutary warning to the higher orders of the intelligent universe, and to serve the purpose of a powerful link, by which to fasten them in firmer loyalty to his throne, a link

which, in conjunction with other principles of attachment, would be attended with all the certainty, without any of the galling and paralyzing bondage of physical necessity and fate. The very fact of the apostacy, at least, proves, beyond all doubt, that in the history of the angelical economy, there has been a period in which these exalted beings were placed in a state of probation, and subject to a system of discipline, administered by rewards and punishments, similar to those which are now designed to operate upon the character and conduct of man. In the case of those who failed to stand the test of that awful and important trial, we know what has been the result; and the reward of those who maintained their fidelity—of the Abdiels in that arduous combat with temptation—is not, we may presume, any such elevation into an absolute *necessity* of continued obedience, as would in any degree interfere with their liberty, or neutralize the effect of those motives which arise from their natural susceptibility of happiness or misery; for this would close the noblest channel of the felicity of a rational and intelligent being. We can see no ground for the assertion of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, therefore, that “liberty of will” is a circumstance peculiar to man in his present state, being a proof of infirmity, inasmuch as it is impossible that good or evil angels should for once deliberate between good and evil, they being severally determined to good and evil. This statement seems founded upon a wrong view of liberty, as if it was any thing like *indifference* to either side of the question proposed, or a nearly

equal measure of attachment to both sides; whereas, in fact, liberty requires nothing more, as we shall hereafter show, than that the judgment should clearly pronounce one line of conduct most conducive to happiness, and that there be a freedom unbiassed and uncontrolled by any foreign or inherent influence to pursue that line. All the necessity, therefore, that can be consistently supposed to bind angelic beings to purity, loyalty, and obedience, is the distinct and unhesitating apprehension which they have of the supreme and transcendent excellency of that blessed Being, in whose presence they experience such fulness of joy,—combined unquestionably with a spontaneous love of moral purity and excellency. They are under no other necessity than that which arises from their exquisite susceptibility to all the benignant and rapturous emanations, which continually flow forth from Him, to cheer and delight those who are admitted into his blissful fellowship, accompanied, doubtless, with the consciousness, whenever the reflection presents itself to their minds, of the extreme wretchedness of those who had rebelled, and *must* always be the doom of those who rebel, against his majesty. And what can there be in all this to interfere with the “liberty of will,” beyond what, in a lower degree, indeed, may, upon the same principle, be supposed to interfere with the liberty of will of every good man, whose habits are in any measure conformed to piety and virtue, even in the present state. We seem, therefore, upon the most enlarged view of the government of God, to be justified in laying it down as one of the first axioms of

liberty and moral agency, that there be a susceptibility of enjoyment and suffering belonging to those who are the responsible and accountable subjects of that agency.

It may be worthy of consideration, whether this view of the ground-work of liberty, responsibility, and moral agency, as combined in the character of man, may not throw some light upon, and go a considerable way in accounting for the origin of evil as necessarily connected with suffering. The question *ποθεν το κακον?*—whence is evil—is one which has puzzled and embarrassed philosophers and moral investigators, Heathen and Christian, in every age of the world; and it may be one of those phenomena, which must always continue mysteries, or ultimate and unaccountable facts to man here below. In moral science, however, he who teaches to analyze into simpler principles a more complicated fact, or, by a process of generalization, applies to the solution of a great variety of problems a principle, which lies deeper in the system, and nearer to the foundation of the whole, contributes as really though ever so humbly, to the discovery of truth in his own line of investigation, as he who decomposes a chemical substance into elements, which had never before been known, or demonstrates such relations of quantity as hitherto had escaped observation. We inquire not whether the preceding view of an essential requisite to the exercise of rational liberty, and to moral agency, fully explains and accounts for the existence of evil, so as to make it perfectly accordant with the views generally entertained of the divine justice and

benevolence. But we submit whether it does not at least carry this awful phenomenon of the divine government somewhat more deeply into our nature, and does not mingle its possible existence more with the very essence of moral agency than has generally been considered. If a susceptibility of pain, as well as of pleasure, associated with an order of circumstances, from a peculiar combination of which the one as well as the other may arise, lies at the very foundation of rational liberty and responsible agency, it follows that a possibility of evil is an absolute and indispensable part of a moral and probationary scheme. Penal evil, as the only alternative of a wrong choice, or of an abuse of liberty, seems to constitute the very essence of the system. To suppose Jehovah, therefore, in the exercise of his sovereignty, to prevent, as He unquestionably might do in any particular instance, the introduction or the existence of that, the entrance of which as the only possible alternative of an abuse of discretionary power, constituted the antagonist muscle of the moral frame, would be to suppose him to act in immediate and direct opposition to the very system of moral government which he had established. If the appointment of a moral system be capable of producing the greatest and noblest happiness, and if the susceptibility of suffering be so necessarily connected with that plan, as that without such a possibility the scheme cannot be maintained, and would leave no adequate ground for the exercises of preference and volition, then how is it inconsistent with the benevolence of the Deity, rightly understood, that He



should not sovereignly prevent *that*, the arbitrary and universal prevention of which would utterly destroy and neutralize the very principles of the economy which He had instituted? The capability of penal suffering, and the absolute necessity of its introduction as the only alternative of disobedience, seems as much an inherent quality of a system, which is to govern rational creatures, through the instrumentality of motives, as it is a law of force, that a body, which is driven by two impulses, meeting each other at right angles, should move in the diagonal of a square. Whatever superficial notions we may form of the benevolence and the equity of Jehovah, and whatever tasks we may impose upon these attributes in order to force them into a consistency with our notions, it is not on a deeper and more deliberate estimate of the case, a requirement, which can be fairly demanded of these sublime perfections, that God should absolutely annihilate a system so beneficial in its general bearings, and that He should deprive so many of the transcendent happiness which it secured to them, and which it afforded to all the opportunity of securing, because some would choose to deprive themselves of that happiness, and voluntarily take the alternative of misery. To expect happiness as the invariable and necessary result of a moral government, would evidently be requiring an impossibility. The possible existence of evil is essential to such a government:—its actual existence is an effect, which Jehovah was bound neither in justice nor goodness to prevent; because such sovereign prevention would, at once, undermine a scheme,

from which there doubtless will ultimately flow a vast preponderance of good.

A scheme of considerable plausibility and of very high pretensions was advanced at the commencement of this century, and developed at great length by the Rev. Dr. Williams, professing to explain the Origin of Evil, and to remove all the difficulties of the question, upon the principle of the natural and essential *defectibility* of the creature. To that tendency to degenerate, and to fall away, which is inseparable from the nature of a created being, as such, and the effect of which tendency can be obviated only by the communication of sovereign aid from the Creator, the name of metaphysical evil is given—an evil apparently innocent in itself, but which, left to its own course, will inevitably result in moral and physical evil. And the way, in which this scheme attempts to reconcile the actual existence of misery with the justice and benevolence of the Deity, is to suppose, that those who were originally by necessity *defectible* beings, and subjects of metaphysical evil, had no *right*, upon principles of equity, to expect any such sovereign interposition on the part of Jehovah to prevent the moral evil that would otherwise unavoidably result from their very condition as creatures.

It is surprising that a man of Dr. Williams's undoubted piety and good sense could bring himself seriously to believe, that such a view of the original state of man, even if correct, could solve the grand perplexity, with which this subject is embarrassed. It is wonderful, that this excellent individual did not

at once perceive, that his scheme did not in any degree remove or even alleviate the difficulty, but only threw it back one step, and involved it, perhaps, in a little greater obscurity. For, allowing the notion of metaphysical evil as identical with the inherent defectibility of a creature, of which Professor Stampfer and others speak, by what process of metaphysical, physical, or moral chemistry does this original and unavoidable defect of nature become transmuted into crime, and an equitable ground of suffering? To view sin as a defect, indeed, or as the result of a defect, which could only be obviated by sovereign power and grace, and yet *was not* in all cases obviated, instead of relieving the difficulty, seems rather to increase it. What is the real difference between creating a being, which, from the original impotence of its nature, independently of any direct fault of Will, would evolve misery, if we may so speak, out of the elements of its own existence, as combined with the circumstances in which it was placed; and creating him at once subject to suffering, without any such progressive evolution of inherent principles? The difference is no other than that of laying a train of greater or less complication, and that of immediately and directly applying the igneous spark; of which combustion, in either case, would be the necessary and inevitable effect.

We tremble, lest we should use unbecoming terms, or employ unworthy similitudes even in the exposure of an erroneous scheme, which is so closely connected and intertwined with the character and conduct of Him, whose justice is unimpeachable,

whose purity is without a stain, and whose benevolence is, doubtless, commensurate with the universe, which He has made. But it is difficult, without incurring such danger, to evince the utter inadequacy of a theory of such bold assumption to account for what it professes completely to explain,—its futility as an instrument of “vindicating the ways of God to man,” and the inexplicable confusion of metaphysical and moral, and subsequently of natural evil, of misfortune and of blameworthiness, of impotence and criminality, which it involves.

But although this scheme may be useless, and no other perhaps can fully clear up the difficulties and embarrassments of the divine government, as connected with the origin and operations of evil, any more than the system of Copernicus and Newton can carry us beyond a certain point in the explication of the phenomena of the material universe, or that of Locke can unfold to us all the mysteries of the human understanding, yet whatever view of our nature as living and voluntary beings has a tendency to withdraw the sufferings to which we are exposed from every thing that may be deemed arbitrary, or even sovereign in the purposes of Jehovah, and to attach them in the form of a general law to the very essence of things, supposing these things to exist, must certainly be considered a step in advance, and so far a relief to what may still be acknowledged to press heavily upon our feeble faculties, and to require much simplicity of faith, much humility of mind, to bear with the submission which becomes us. If an

original susceptibility of pain, and an actual suffering of pain, in case of a voluntary abuse of discretionary power conferred, enters into the very nature and essence of a moral agent, it seems to follow that the possibility of evil is involved in the very existence of living beings capable of exercising a Will, so that the alternative is between the non-existence of such beings, and the possibility of the existence of evil; and whether the existence of unnumbered hosts of intelligent and exalted creatures, *all* capable of the most exquisite enjoyment, or the original abstinence from the creation of such beings, because some of them would choose to render their existence a curse rather than a blessing, were more accordant with such views as we are warranted from nature and revelation to form of the justice and benevolence of the Deity, it surely cannot be a matter of doubt. In order to square the conduct of Jehovah, whether positive or permissive, with any unauthorized or inadequate idea, which we may have formed of these attributes, we surely are not justified in imposing upon him a task, which involves impossibility or absurdity. Nor is it wise in us to embarrass ourselves with difficulties, which may arise in a great measure from our error in supposing his character to be formed of such a benevolence as is only concerned in the prevention of suffering, while, in fact, it embraces other attributes equally essential to his perfection, though by no means destructive of that sublime and lovely quality. It is a true and profound remark of Bishop Butler, that the character of

the Deity, so far as we are capable of ascertaining it, is not that of *mere* benevolence. We should do well also to recollect the saying of the poet, that

A God all mercy is a God unjust.

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## SECTION VI.

AN INVARIABLE DESIRE OF THE GREATER APPARENT GOOD  
ESSENTIAL TO MORAL LIBERTY.

3. WE would state as another essential ground of the exercises of volition, that the subject of those exercises should be so formed, and have his susceptibilities so regulated, as to have an *invariable desire and preference* of the *Greater Good*, when presented to the view. This is indeed a natural result of the circumstance immediately preceding. If there be a susceptibility of enjoyment and suffering which must, in their causes, be identified with good and evil, it is obvious that in most circumstances they must be varied in every possible proportion. Good and evil can rarely be considered purely and entirely such in any case. A lesser evil may be relatively a good, and, in the same manner, a lesser good, contrasted with a higher and nobler form of good, may be a serious evil. In a state of things, therefore, in which these elements are associated and frequently blended with each other in endless and embarrassing combination, the subject of volition would be bewildered in continual difficulty and doubt, and would hardly ever come to any determinate point in the exercises of his Will, unless there



was in him a principle, which instinctively directed him to the choice of that object, which presented itself to him in the light of a superior advantage. We mean not that he must always, as a matter of course, choose what is absolutely the greater good. But there must be, in his nature, a principle which inclines him to the choice of that which, at the moment of contemplation, at least, appears to promise the more exquisite gratification, or the more valuable good. It is this comparative estimate of different, and not unfrequently of conflicting claims, indeed, which calls the preferring faculty into exercise, though it is by no means necessary that a regular and formal comparison should be instituted every time that the Will is to give its direction to the conduct. In the common concerns of life, the great line in which it is most advantageous that the course of action should flow, is marked with such clearness, and universally recognized as so certain, and consequently has become so habitual, that any attempt at balancing interests of this kind would be altogether needless.

But in the first decisions of the Will, or in circumstances of a new and difficult nature, there must always be a latent, if not a palpable and open algebraic process of calculating the plus and the minus of good expected to be enjoyed from the respective candidates for preference and superior regard. Volition or willing, indeed, is more an act of mind yielding to this superior claim, and recognizing its legitimate demand to attention or pursuit, than any particular *power* or *faculty* distinctly

existing in the mind. It is that determination of the judgment, frequently accompanied with a strong feeling of the heart, which tells in clear and intelligible language, that such an object, or such a line of conduct, is that which has most aptitude to give happiness, either with respect to liveliness or permanence, or perhaps to both. When the mind by any means has been brought to this state, it may truly be said to will or to prefer that thing which it thus represents to itself as most desirable, and to the immediate enjoyment or pursuit of which it excites the other principles of the character. It is on this view of superior desirableness that the whole system of volition is built, and if we could conceive a being possessed of life, and of a susceptibility of happiness and misery, and yet, by some strange formation of character, destitute of the inclination of which we now speak, we can see no steady nor adequate grounds upon which such an one should exercise his volitions.

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## SECTION VII.

THE PREROGATIVE OF REASON, IN THE ULTIMATE DETERMINATIONS OF THE WILL, THE DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTIC OF ACCOUNTABLE LIBERTY.

THESE three points—the possession of life—a susceptibility of enjoyment and suffering—and an invariable tendency to the greater apparent good, are to be regarded as first principles, as fundamental axioms in the whole system of spontaneous agency and volition.

They are indispensable to every created being who has a Will, and is regulated by adequate motives in its exercises. Without these properties, action must be nothing more than the result of an original simple tendency, or of mechanical force, destitute of all sensation and voluntary choice, or it must be something wild and capricious, guided by no steadiness of principle, and directed to no object of ultimate desire. It can hardly be necessary here to state, that in this discussion, we do not class the Supreme Being himself among those voluntary agents, whose Wills must be entirely excited and controlled by an appeal to the original susceptibilities of their nature. His volitions must be something so completely different in their origin, in their nature, in their mode of operation, in their reasons, and in their ends, from those of which created beings, possessed of certain qualities, and placed in an order of circumstances most deeply and unavoidably affecting their character and emotions, are the subjects, that it would be utterly useless and unmeaning to trace any analogy beyond some very broad outlines, or to apply to both cases the same process of reasoning and remark. Jehovah, in the exercise of his supreme and unaccountable, though at the same time most pure, and holy, and benevolent Will, is a law unto himself, and is the end of his own actions; and his perfections are the measure of rectitude, the last rule of excellence. The case of creatures is very different. Merely sensitive beings know no other guide or stimulant of their Wills than the original susceptibilities implanted in them, brought under the corres-

pendent influence of objects and circumstances designed to affect them.

But man is not merely a *sensitive* creature. This he might have been, without rising to the scale of a free, accountable, and rational agent. He might have been a living sentient being—he might have had a native capacity of pleasure and pain—he might have been powerfully and instrumentally urged to prefer the greater good—the object which immediately appeared to his unreflecting sense to promise much gratification. There might have been such a correspondency as this established between his appetites and external objects, and this relation of his emotions to outward things might certainly call forth in him the exercise of a sensitive tendency, such as we represented to be characteristic of the brute creation. But, without something beyond this—without something superior to these blind propensities—something capable, in various ways, of regulating and controlling them, he would have been utterly unfit for sustaining the character of a moral agent, nor with any propriety could he have been said to possess the faculty of free and rational volition. And here we feel that we have arrived at the grand point of inquiry: Is man free? and, if he is, what is the distinguishing circumstance which constitutes his freedom, and qualifies him for moral agency, and for a responsibility so awful as is involved in that agency?

Now, with whatever real or imaginary difficulties this question may be embarrassed, in whatever obscurity nature may have involved it, in some of its ulterior ramifications, or in whatever web of meta-

physical subtilty nice controversialists and prejudiced disputants may have entangled it, no man, who forms a just and enlightened estimate of his own character, faculties, and destinies, can seriously doubt whether he be free. However scriptural and lamentably true may be the doctrine of the bondage of the Will, and of the enslaving power of lusts and passions, as a theological tenet—however correctly it may be said, as an illustration of the gross and utter depravity of our moral nature, that, since the apostasy, man is only free to sin, but not free to holiness and virtue,—still it cannot for a moment be questioned by any one who dispassionately consults either the dictates of nature, the records of conscience, the arrangements of providence, or the declarations of Scripture, that he is possessed of such a liberty of action, and such a power of discretionary self-control, as are sufficient to justify that course of divine government which evidently regards him as a fit subject of rewards and punishments; and when we consider the awful magnitude of the evil to which he renders himself obnoxious, on the alleged perversion and abuse of his native freedom of action, it cannot surely be an equivocal or problematical question, whether he had been free to act otherwise. It is with no less truth than simplicity and admirable conciseness, that Bishop Butler remarked, that we are treated as *if* we were free, and, therefore, we *are* free. Whatever logical artillery the polemic may direct against this fact, whatever quibbles of reasoning, or whatever array of weighty argument may be advanced against it, and whatever difficulty, upon principles of theory and system, there

may be to repel the assault, and to maintain it in all the soundness of technical symmetry and consistency, yet, like an impregnable bulwark of nature, it stands upon its own basis, firm as the fortress of morality itself, coeval with humanity, and destructible only when man shall cease to be accountable, or God shall cease to be just.

It is not enough to grant, as philosophical necessitarians have done, that man is free to act as he pleases, while it is at the same time maintained that it as necessarily pleases him to act in one way, as a stone falls down to the earth—that, in his most spontaneous and unfettered actions, he is subject to an influence, over which he has no more command or control than the criminal has over the chains by which he is bound, or the wheels of the vehicle in which he is conveyed to execution. It is in vain to attempt to escape out of the palpable absurdity, or to hide the glaring incongruity of this preposterous representation, or, at least, of notions which amount to the full import of this representation, by saying that it is allowed to man, in all his volitions and determinations, to follow the bent of his own mind, and that it is as necessary he should choose in the manner in which it is assumed that he *does* choose, as that any one event in nature should follow another. If all that is meant by the necessity which is attached to the exercises of volition, imports no more than this, it surely did not require much philosophy to make out such a mere truism. It would appear, on this principle, that the profound and complicated theorem, which it required such a mighty apparatus



of reasoning, hypotheses, and illustrations to demonstrate, is no more than this,—that a man must of necessity, nay, of philosophical necessity, choose, what it is already taken for granted as a fact, that he does choose. But surely there must be something more than this in the theory of necessity, as relating to the exercises of volition; otherwise to what purpose would be all the parade of learning and philosophy, if the object was no more than to prove a proposition, so purely and palpably trifling, as that a man must prefer and will and act, as he does prefer and will and act—a proposition which is but another and a modified formula of the axiom, that the same thing cannot be and not be at the time. If there is any meaning worthy of notice in the assertion of necessity, as governing the acts of the human will, it must be that there is some external influence, or some combination of circumstances, independent of itself, the impulse of which it cannot control or resist, or by the presence of which it is so completely paralyzed, as never to attempt a resistance. Then, if this be a just theory of volition, if this be the real economy of the human mind, upon what imaginable basis can desert, or blameworthiness rest? Where is the ground of punishment? What is the distinguishing principle upon which man, in the full possession of his faculties, and transgressing in the midst of warnings and exhortations, the grounds and reasons of which he was fully qualified to appreciate, is more justly exposed to punishment than the maniac, who, driven by an equally powerful impulse of Will, had com-

mitted the same act? Surely misery is not so trifling a thing as that it should be withheld, and most properly withheld in one case, and largely inflicted in the other, without some very serious difference in the moral estimate of the acts. Upon the principles of the scheme, which we are now resisting, the only difference of the Necessity which produced these acts, is that, in the one instance, it was a necessity which entailed no evil consequence upon its subject, in the other it was the necessity of the stoic philosopher and his slave, combining the necessity of punishment with the necessity of crime. It is futile and trifling to say that reasons were suggested to the mind of the sane man, which could not be suggested to that of the insane. To what purpose are reasons, if they do not prove themselves sufficiently strong to form a chain of necessity, which will prevail over the antagonist chain already leading onward the mind to its determinations? What avails it to bind green withes upon the arms of Samson? To say, as has sometimes been inadvertently and superficially done, that the blameworthiness and punishableness of a crime lie in its own nature, and are estimated by what the act is in *itself*, and by the real *state* of the mind, without any reference to the *manner* in which it was brought into existence, is surely to lose sight of the fact, that in thus estimating an action, as odious in itself, and as entitling its author to punishment, there is always a latent supposition, that the perpetrator of such an action *might* have chosen otherwise, than he did choose to act. The measure of its moral odiousness

and guilt is always proportioned to the supposed unbiassed freedom of his mind, and so far as it is deemed the result of circumstances and influences, which have interfered with that freedom, he is considered worthy of pity rather than of punishment. If, therefore, a clear distinction be made by God and man in estimating the voluntary conduct of a rational intellectual being, and that of those sensitive creatures which are destitute of these endowments, as it stands related to punishment, it follows that there must be some material and most important difference in the exercise of the faculty of Will, as the immediate instigator and regulator of that conduct in these two ranks of beings. Founding, therefore, our judgment upon this palpable phenomenon of human nature in its sound state, in contrast with other sentient beings not similarly endowed, or with itself, in a state of mental incapacity and imbecility, as subjecting to guilt and punishment, we are constrained to come to the conclusion, that it is the *Prerogative of Reason* in the ultimate determinations of the Will, which properly and distinguishingly constitutes the liberty of moral agency, or as it has usually been called, the freedom of the Will in man\*.

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\* Since the first edition of this work was published, the author has been much struck with a coincidence of idea exhibited in connection with this and some other parts of his subject, in a short essay entitled *The Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*, by an American citizen; an essay distinguished by a profound and accurate view of the mental faculties as bearing on moral and religious truth. —“Man has a will and a conscience, and he must *understand* the rule in order to *will* obedience. A law therefore adapted to man's nature, must be adapted to his *understanding*.” (p. 46.)

It is the possession of this sublime endowment, which forms so broad and palpable a line of distinction between man and all other inferior voluntary agents; for it is very possible, as is obvious in the case of those in whom this principle has not been developed, or has lost its commanding influence, to have a Will—to be a subject of volitions even the strongest and most powerful, without moral liberty or responsibility in the exercise of that faculty. It seems evident that this principle forms the hinge, on which really turns this important question in the character of man, from the circumstance that accountable liberty and moral agency are universally regarded as coeval and coextensive in his nature with the possession and exercise of right reason. They begin and end at the same time, and are invariably united in the same acts of conduct; so that wherever the one is absent, the other cannot be present. Reason is pre-eminently the faculty of judgment and combination. It is that which traces the connection between causes and effects, between the various divisions of duration into which time has been marked out as past, present, or future. It is that which decides upon the merits of actions, and pursues them, through all their combinations of influence, to their remote and eventual consequences, and by this means determines their comparative desirableness, as they relate to the susceptibilities of the soul, so as to exhibit an adequate ground for choice and selection, amidst the diversified lines of movement, which present their claims to the eye of the mind. It is the business of this noble faculty

to arbitrate between interfering demands—between opposite and conflicting tendencies. To have this discretionary power—to be able to summon the experience of the past, the sensations of the present, and the probable anticipations of the future, into judgment, in order to determine upon a litigated measure; to hold the scale with a firm and even hand, and with the intellectual eye steadily fixed upon the tongue of the balance, in order to perceive to what side the weight of good preponderates, and to give its verdict accordingly,—the faculty of conducting this discriminating process enters into the very nature, and forms almost the very definition of rational intelligence. Without such a directing and controlling power, man would be utterly unfit for the rank which he occupies in the scale of being.

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### SECTION VIII.

#### PUNISHMENT NOT INFLICTED WHERE REASON IS INCAPABLE OF EXERCISING ITS CONTROL.

To evince that it is this Prerogative of Reason to exert a determining influence over the various affections and susceptibilities, which enter into the exercises of the Will, that must be regarded as constituting the essence of human freedom and the groundwork of moral agency, we would remark, in the first place, that, in our estimate of character, we never consider those as deserving of punishment, in whom Reason is not in a state of sufficient strength or development to exercise this salutary control.

Moral agency, as connected with responsibility, is altogether founded upon a liableness to punishment on the one hand, and a capacity of remunerative happiness on the other. Now there are two circumstances indispensably necessary to constitute just and rational and effective ground of punishment. There must be first, a susceptibility of suffering in the subject, upon which it is inflicted or designed to be inflicted; and there must next be liberty belonging to that being, in consequence of the voluntary and conscious abuse of which he becomes a legitimate subject of punishment, for the various purposes of reformation, discipline, and example. The first of these circumstances is necessary, because without it there can be no real punishment applied; however, in the paroxysms of passionate revenge, or in the cooler and more deliberate ferocity of baffled and disappointed resentment, there may be the external machinery, the show, and the mockery of punishment. But how contemptible and absurd is the exhibition of this impotent and imbecile rage! How vain and ludicrous in its purpose, and how utterly foiled in its end! When we see the child wreaking its little passing vengeance upon the chair or the table, against which it has run and hurt its head, and with which, therefore, as the immediate occasion of its pain, it associates the idea of guilt and punishableness, or when it applies more calm chastisement to the picture or the doll, which refuses to move and to act in obedience to lawful authority, we smile at the incongruity, or if we view it in a more serious



light, we endeavour by such reasonings as are adapted to the child's capacity, to check in its earliest manifestations a tendency, which might otherwise grow into a settled habit of violence and vindictiveness. But when we contemplate the inflated and frantic Xerxes at the head of the armies of the East, ordering the infliction of so many lashes upon the Hellespont as a rebel, who had the insufferable daring to disturb the arrangements of his master's mighty armament, we not only laugh at the folly and the complete futility of such an act, but we are astonished at the effect of flattery and despotic power, in paralyzing the faculties of the understanding so completely, and in strengthening the malignant and vindictive passions to a degree, that is destructive to all sense and reason. When we think, again, of the unseemly indignities, which the annals of tyranny and persecution record as having been offered to the bodies, to the mutilated trunks, the half putrified limbs, and even to the scarce distinguishable ashes of the obnoxious dead; when we read of the inanimate frames, at one time, of rebels and traitors, at another, of patriots and saints, of generous and self-devoting champions for their country's liberties, and of martyrs and confessors, who had died in a still more glorious and illustrious cause, torn by ruffian hands from their several repositories of silent and quiet repose, in order to be maimed by the axe or hung in a gibbet, that the eyes of triumphant barbarity might feast themselves, at least, with the illusive semblance of further suffering and humiliation, we rise, indeed,

with indignant detestation against such scenes, as insulting to the decencies of humanity, as in many instances completely contravening the demands of truth and justice, and as indications of a fierce and dark revenge in the perpetrators of such acts, which no extremity of agony and no measure of prostrate mortification can satiate; but we feel, at the same time, that in such cases punishment and suffering, except as they may regard the living, are completely out of the question\*. We are perfectly conscious, that the vitally susceptible alone can feel a pang, as well as experience a transport. The atheistic philosopher even persuaded himself, that while he was yet alive he had escaped in a great degree from the dominion of punishment, and in reply to the menace of the tyrant exclaimed, "It differs nothing to Theodorus, whether he rots on the earth, or in the air."

The second requisite above-mentioned, the possession of liberty, is necessary, because that without such a discretionary power over the active faculties, however there may be a susceptibility of punishment, it is contrary to every principle of justice to inflict it. We have already remarked the absurdity and incongruity of attempting to excite suffering, where there was no capacity of feeling, and represented

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\* Among the most disgraceful and absurd exhibitions of this kind, which have outraged religion and humanity, was the exhumation and subsequent burning of the remains of Bucer and Fagius under the authority of a commission from Cardinal Pole.—*Vid. STRYPE, Eccles. Mem.*, iii. i. 510, Zurich Letters, Parker Soc.

such objects to be entirely out of the range of blame and guilt, and moral discipline. And, if in such cases, it is impossible to apply punishment, so in the destitution of the circumstance which we are now considering—an entire freedom of mind extending to every act of the conduct, it would be utterly unjust to inflict it. If, therefore, liberty—an exemption from any overwhelming constraint from within, or from without—a power of unquestionable self-government and self-control be that, which alone qualifies a living sentient being for punishment designedly inflicted, there cannot be a surer method, a method more strictly of the experimental kind, for discovering the nature and bounds of freedom as a principle of the human mind, than to mark out those limits, within which alone punishment can be legitimately awarded as the due desert of guilt. Whatever principle, or faculty, or endowment of human nature is found coincident and coextensive with the capability of contracting guilt, and consequently with a just liability to punishment; whatever quality of the mind or character is found to run parallel with these fundamental grounds and invariable accompaniments of responsible agency, that quality or endowment must unquestionably be a main point in the system of human liberty. If that principle be found to limit guilt and punishableness in all cases, and under all possible circumstances; if it be the test, by which alone is tried the equity of that intentional suffering, which all acknowledge can be justly occasioned only to those, who were free in the actions which call it forth, then surely it must be granted,

that such a principle must be very closely connected with liberty itself, if it does not enter into its essence and form its very mainspring. In order to render the matter clearer, we may in such a case technically consider punishableness, as a species of middle term, connecting the principle upon which it is founded with liberty, to which it is also attached by the same inseparable tie. In the government of God, and in all the lawful and equitable administrations of the authority of man, they are the free alone who are punished, and if we are at any loss to determine who the free are, what leading and distinguishing quality of character this liberty involves, we have only to inquire, what endowments of mind must belong to the individuals who are considered proper subjects of punishment, as being capable of contracting guilt. And this investigation will at once determine who are the free, and what it is which constitutes them such.

To discover this is no difficulty, for it is at once obvious, and universally recognised, that they alone can really contract blame, and be justly punished, who have the leading and commanding faculty of Reason in full growth, and capable of exerting its discriminative power in forming a judgment of the action, upon which punishment is entailed. We mean not to say that it is necessary Reason should exist in every such instance in the highest possible degree of improvement and cultivation, in order to capacitate for guilt, and to expose to punishment. For Reason may be so paralyzed by inordinate passions habitually indulged—it may be so numbed by

inactivity and indolence and neglect—it may be so blinded by prejudices and evil habits—it may be so besotted by surfeiting and intemperance, as to be utterly disabled from performing its appropriate office of conducting the preferences of the mind, and directing them to their legitimate objects. But the guilt contracted in this imbecile state of the rational faculty is rather aggravated than relieved, because the whole series of improper indulgences, or of criminal acts, by which it has been reduced to this state, or has been prevented from rising to its proper level in the character, were so many accumulations of guilt, which are now punished in the impotence, to which they have led, or in the exemplary sufferings which are almost the necessary result of that impotence,—just as in one of the states of Greece, double punishment was awarded to a crime committed in a state of intoxication, one portion for having actually perpetrated the crime, and the other for the inebriety, which gave occasion to the perpetration of it. In the original view of the case, the possession of the unimpeded use of the faculty of Reason is universally considered as indispensably necessary, both to the commission of actual crime, in the moral sense of the expression, and to the sufferance of the punishment, which is the result of that crime. This is obvious, from the respective cases of infants, idiots, and madmen, and of the whole class of those sensitive beings, which are supposed either incapable of discerning a difference between right and wrong, or of discovering the object of punishment, both retrospective as it re-

gards the past, and prospective as it regards their future conduct. Whenever there is supposed to be a faculty capable of perceiving these distinctions, and of benefiting from the results of discipline and experience, there punishment is deemed just and salutary; but beyond these capabilities it cannot with propriety and discretion—it cannot without a gross violation of the law of equity and kindness, without an unwarrantable exertion of arbitrary power, proceed a single step. It is utterly wrong to say that all which is necessary, or all that can be conceived as belonging to the liberty of moral agency, is no more than that the person acting should do as he pleases, and be influenced in what he does, by the strongest motives; for the infant of six months old, and the most frantic maniac, so far as he is exempt from coercion, act as much under the influence of feelings, which operate with them in the shape of motives, as the most cool and dispassionate and calculating reasoner in the land. But who would say that the former are equally subjects of moral government, and consequently as firmly bound by the sanctions of that government as the latter. Moral freedom, in fact, which is the kind of freedom we are now investigating, consists more in a power of restraining, selecting, and controlling actions than in impetuously urging them forward. And hence intellectual impotence, an inability to exert this sovereignty of power and dominion over the subordinate faculties of the soul—over the affections and propensities, which are the more immediate stimulants to action, utterly dis-



qualifies for the enjoyment of liberty, the obligations of morality, and the penal sanctions of government. In the exercise of accountable freedom it is always assumed; it is laid down as the acknowledged basis of the whole system of discipline or responsibility, that the Understanding or the rational Faculty is in a state to command the sensual passions and other inferior inclinations, so as to prevent their deviation from the line of rectitude, and to secure their strict and unvarying adherence, in all their operations and effects, to the authorized principles, and the established laws of conduct. There is something more, therefore, required to constitute such liberty of Will as can alone qualify an individual for being a moral agent, than the maintainers of philosophical, or even of theological, necessity are willing to grant. It is not enough for this freedom that a man should simply act as he pleases—that he should yield to the influence of the stronger motive, for this the most raving madman, or the most imbecile idiot is as capable of doing as the profoundest philosopher, or the devoutest saint. It is only a part, though an essential and indispensable part of liberty, that an agent should be able to do as he pleases, however unfettered and unlimited that power may be. The influence of motives, as immediately and necessarily directing the conduct, is, in fact, the mere superficial arrangement, the exterior instrumentality which invariably, indeed, precedes the last result, but, in order to attach the character of morality to that result, it must itself have received its direction from something superior and more recondite; and to

represent it as that, which alone is concerned in the liberty of a moral agent, is the same thing as it would be to represent the wheels as the sole agents in guiding the movements of a system of machinery, or the wonderful operations of the steam-engine as traceable no further than the alternations of ascent and descent produced in that part of this complicated framework, which receives the first impression of force, and is inseparably connected in the way of a power more or less proximate with all the subsequent results. One who was utterly unacquainted with the nature, or the existence of the prime mover in this astonishing arrangement of physical powers and adaptations, and with the various joints and valves which are necessary to the secure evolution of the effects eventually designed to be produced, might content himself with barely inspecting the revolutions of the wheels, and the disposition of the connecting links, and affirm this curious and indissoluble arrangement of wheels, and screws, and pistons, to form at least unto man the whole science of the steam-engine, and that everything beyond these palpable agents, as belonging to the instrument itself, was mystery and impenetrable obscurity. We know perfectly well, indeed, that in physical, as well as intellectual or metaphysical operations, there is an ultimate power, which can be traced only to the sovereign will of a supreme Disposer; and that in our inquiries into both we must rest in that will, as our ultimate basis. But we maintain that mere motives as such, without any regard to the means by which they have been produced, or the conside-

rations by which they are accompanied, do no more constitute that ultimate ground, in our estimate of human liberty, than wheels and rods form the terminating point of our investigations into the nature of the steam-engine. We, in fact, recognise the principle—we assume the point, that merely to have the power of willing or of acting as he pleases, is not that which constitutes the essence of the freedom of a moral agent in all our administrations of penal justice. The most atrocious criminal unquestionably acted under the instigation of motives, which, as existing, and as prevailing, in the absence of all interference on the part of a better principle, or a higher faculty, operated in him with commanding influence; and yet we consider him, and surely we justly consider him, if possessed of reason and understanding, as accountable for the result, and adjudge him a punishment which is deemed proportionate to the enormity of his guilt. A maniac, who escapes from his chain, or in a fit of unaccountable phrenzy takes advantage of that measure of physical liberty, which, it was hoped, might be safely indulged to him, rushes upon the first impotent individual that he meets with, and, perhaps, takes away his life. It cannot be said that in this lamentable deed he acts without a motive, without a most powerful and commanding motive, though that motive might not be malignant hate, or a lust of gain; nor can it be affirmed that he acts otherwise than as he chooses, than as it appears best to him to give scope to that excess of ferocious irritation, under which his nervous and mental system labours. He most assuredly acted without any

external incitement; he acted under the undisturbed influence of the motives—of the precipitate suggestions of his disordered mind. He was, therefore, in that respect, as free as the most deliberate and cold-blooded murderer. But do we regard him, do we criminate him, do we penally treat him as a free agent? If we do not, there must be some other difference between his act, as an act of liberty and free agency, and that of the designing and calculating destroyer of human life, than the difference in the state of the circulation of the blood, or the degrees of irritability in the nervous system. And wherever that difference is found to rest, that point must constitute the definitive feature, the essential germ of the liberty of moral agency. That point of human nature, in the instance before us, we can be at no loss to determine. The consideration of it is embodied in the whole scheme of the government of God, as it is more partially developed in the progress of time, and as it will be more distinctly unfolded in the destinies of eternity. The assumption of it is laid down as the basis, and the recognition of it is interwoven with the whole system of human judicature. The murderer is endued with a principle of Reason, which, in the exercise of its legitimate prerogative in his character, ought and has the power, to act as the inquisitor of his motives, the controller of his passions, the regulator of his conduct, and the guardian of his security. He is, therefore, free, and for the abuse of his liberty is justly liable to punishment. The maniac has unhappily lost this distinguishing principle of

his nature as a moral being. In him the balance of power has been destroyed. The commanding faculty has lost its necessary pre-eminence in the system. The head has been severed from the moral frame, and nothing remains but an occasional convulsive movement of disjointed faculties. He has ceased deliberately to think, though he has not ceased to feel, to move, and to be impelled. He has become incapable of guiding himself with judgment, though not of being actuated by motives. He is still able to will and to act, though he knows not how rightly to direct his volitions, or to regulate his actions. In him the power is extinct, which could say unto the tide of inclination, Hitherto mayest thou safely go, and no further. In him the ear is shut which could listen to the calls of duty, the dictates of conscience, and the eloquence of affection. In him the eye is closed which could glance over the past, survey the present, and penetrate into the future, and mark out in this extensive scenery such prominent points of observation as might form rules of experience, incentives to action, and directions of prudent conduct. We, therefore, view him with kindness and compassion, instead of prosecuting him with vengeance. And by this we are led to a second consideration, which serves to prove and illustrate the fact, that it is Reason exerting a supreme and commanding power, that forms the distinguishing point, the very essence of the liberty of man as a moral and accountable agent.

## SECTION IX.

## REASON CAPABLE OF EXCITING NEW VOLITIONS.

WE now proceed to remark, therefore, that Reason, as constituting the deliberating, the judging faculty of the human mind, *can* excite new volitions—volitions essentially different from those which would have inevitably risen, if the same faculty had been dormant, careless, or indifferent. If it be the province of Reason to exert this creative power in the economy of the human mind, it must be allowed to be far more closely connected with the question of liberty and of the exercises of the Will, than has often been supposed. Man is an intellectual as well as a sensitive being—a being of momentary passions and emotions. He is not, therefore led, or at least, he ought not to be led like the lower animals by mere instinct and present feeling in the formation of his habits, in the direction of his preferences, and in the regulation of his conduct. The manner, in which Reason operates in exciting new volitions, and, through the medium of these volitions, in governing the course of the conduct, is not that of constraining or forcing the mind to resolve against the strongest motives: this, indeed, is impossible, and contrary to the whole economy of mental agency, but that of suggesting such views of things as will infallibly act as motives. It is not in the nature of man—it would involve a principle of self-contradiction and neutralization to suppose that he should be able to



will or to act in opposition to what his judgment and feelings unitedly recommend to him as best. But it is in entire accordance with the elements of his intellectual, moral, and sensitive being, that Reason, by exhibiting actions in their real character and as connected with their proper consequences, should materially influence his preferences, and give a new colouring to the whole order of his volitions. There is in the understanding of man an active energy, a prospective and calculating power, which enables it to range over the wide scene of contemplation, and to present to the elective faculty such views of things as are calculated to call it into exercise. It is by thus judiciously availing itself of that original tendency of our nature, which inclines us to the choice of the greater good, that Reason successfully acts upon the faculty of volition, and not by any unnatural attempt to urge us in a direction contrary to our strongest motives. We affirm not that Reason can change the original constitution of the human soul, and so alter its susceptibilities, as that those things should appear desirable to it, which it was made to abhor; but it assuredly has such a power to appeal to those susceptibilities, and so to adapt the scene of contemplation to them, as that a new order of desires and preferences will immediately spring up in the mind. Reason, especially if it be enlightened by faith, is the eye of the soul, by which it is enabled to range over surrounding scenes, by which it discovers a thousand perils, which would have been hidden from the dull vision of sense, and discerns advantages as numerous, which would have escaped

the same contracted faculty. It is the telescope, which the moral combatant in the arduous war of temptation employs to reconnoitre the positions, and to watch the movements of his enemies. It is that transparent and approximating medium, which to the eye of the calm and deliberate observer brings out upon the firmament of futurity a countless multitude of objects, which otherwise would have been lost in the immensity of their distance; and by presenting this new aspect of things, and exhibiting every object under a nearer angle, it naturally calls forth a new series of volitions and determinations. Without neutralizing and utterly destroying the Reason of man, it is impossible to deny that it is capable of exerting a most important influence upon the course of the Will, and upon the whole system of preferences as regulating the actions of the life. To prove this, if it stood in any need of confirmation, we have only to consider how different are the volitions formed in the human mind, when Reason is active and alive, and exerts its full force in selecting, arranging, and discriminating the various claims, which offer themselves to the choice, and when that faculty is heedless through indifference, paralyzed by sensual indulgence and intemperance, or incapacitated by any other circumstance for the exercise of its discerning care or its predominant authority. How different are the choices of the sober man from those of the same man in a state of intoxication! The ground of this difference is, that in the one state Reason is utterly disabled from performing its appropriate office, in directing the general course of volition, by bringing

those considerations prominently forward to the view of the mind, which would have caused the scale of desire to preponderate to the opposite side. In the other state, this enlightened faculty takes a deliberate survey of the conflicting pretensions, which labour to force themselves upon the choice, and estimates them according to their greater or less adaptation, in their ultimate consequences as well as their present effects, to meet those exigencies and susceptibilities, which are implanted in man as a part of his very nature.

It is therefore by judging and by determining in favour of the source of the greater good, so far as it can be ascertained, that Reason becomes the author of new volitions, and a creator of new motives. As it is the great end of man to be happy, to enjoy the greatest measure of good, which is compatible with the wise and benevolent arrangements of his Creator, and with his own nature and capacities, it is assigned to Reason, as the leading attribute of his character, and the distinguishing faculty of his peculiar rank of being, to be the guardian of this happiness, to watch the progress of events in their various relations to it, to give warning, in a clear and audible tone, of the injurious results that may spring from actions and pursuits, in which there may be a strong sensitive propensity to indulge, and to exhibit in all their inherent excellency, and substantial and permanent advantages, such habits and modes of conduct as may for the present be attended with considerable pain and self-denial. It is the office of Reason thus to hold the balance between the several objects and degrees of enjoyment

and essential good, which alternately advance their opposite and often embarrassing claims to human preference, an office which, when duly enlightened and informed, she is fully competent to discharge. To deny her such an active power of superintendence and effective control, is surely to deny a fact in the history of the human mind, of which every one, who reflects upon the intellectual processes which take place in his own character, must be perfectly aware. It is to annihilate and destroy all that is valuable and distinctive in intellect, as the glorious attribute of man, as the umpire of conduct, as the judge of truth, as the salutary director of liberty, as the only earthly guide to happiness. The mutual adaptation of the character of man, and of external objects as capable of receiving and communicating gratification, we know, indeed, to be entirely independent of any exercises of intellect or volition on the part of the former. Outward circumstances, or personal acts of conduct as related to those circumstances, are good or evil, are occasions of more or less comparative happiness or misery to man, simply because the will of God has rendered them such; because the established constitution of nature, as ordained by Him, has stamped upon them these qualities. It is not necessary to liberty that man should be without invincible and unchangeable inclinations of nature. Such inclinations, indeed, are essential as the very groundwork of mental freedom, but it is equally essential that all these inclinations should meet and unite in the one commanding and preponderating emotion of

the choice of the greater good, where various degrees of enjoyment, as springing from different sources, place the mind under the unavoidable necessity of choosing the one or the other.

The relations of the intellectual and physical universe have already been settled, and the laws of human preference are as firm and secure as any of the rest. But then, it is one of these immutable arrangements, that the love of the greater good should always operate in man with a ceaseless and unvarying influence, and that Reason, as improved by diligent cultivation, and as enlightened by whatever additional aid may be graciously vouchsafed, should direct him, and mark out to him with clearness and decision, amidst the manifold illusions with which he is surrounded, what that good is. We know not what higher idea of liberty than this can be formed, that man should be the subject of a continual and intense desire of happiness, that he should feel perfectly free in his choice, and that Reason, aided by the requisite measure of assistance from above should be always at hand, as a vigilant and faithful sentinel, to warn him of danger, and to direct him to those measures, which may ultimately secure the complete attainment of his object. The desire of happiness, and a capacity for its enjoyment, form the ultimate fact, so far as we are capable of investigating it, the gravitating tendency of the human mind; but Reason, somewhat like the original impulse, hypothetically assumed in the Newtonian philosophy, as having been impressed upon the planetary

bodies for the purpose of controlling their centripetal force, was designed so to regulate and restrain this tendency, as to secure the harmony of the system.

It is therefore by exhibiting new views of things, by taking an enlarged survey of the scene of human character and destiny, by bringing the results of experience to bear upon the determinations of present conduct, by removing the veil of futurity, so far as it is the privilege of human sagacity, aided by all the auxiliary lights that have been afforded, to remove it, and by tracing actions to all their remote consequences upon the happiness and security of the individual,—it is by this train of operations that Reason exerts her supremacy in the exercises of human liberty, so far as it is concerned in the creation of fresh motives, and in the excitement of new volitions. Who is not sensible—who has not a thousand times experienced in his own mind, that the suggestion of a new topic of consideration, the development of a new order of results as likely to follow upon the proposed act, or the communication of new intelligence, has, by shifting the scene of contemplation, changed the nature and tendency of his volitions, as related to any object of pursuit, or any line of conduct, and given a new direction to the whole current of his preferences? To deny that the Intellect does thus indirectly operate upon the determinations of the Will, is to oppose the immediate testimony of every man's experience, no dictate of which is more clear and certain, than that the exercises of volition are very materially modified, and in many instances entirely transformed by those inquiries and delibera-



tions, the capacity to engage in which, enters into the very essence, and forms the very definition of Reason, as an endowment of the human character.

To argue against such a fact with some degree of plausibility, to entangle it in a net of logical subtilty and metaphysical sophistry, indeed, we deem to be possible, as many have written elaborate treatises, which it requires no small measure of philosophical acumen to refute, to prove that matter does not exist. But we hold it to be equally impossible to convince any man of reflecting mind, unbiassed by theory, that there is no material universe, as it is to persuade him that he cannot *reason* himself into numberless volitions by the mere energy of his intellectual faculty, applied to the investigation of those actions and pursuits which are most conducive to happiness, and with which is connected the enjoyment of the greater good. We find, in truth, that it is this very appeal to our reason and understanding, through the medium of rewards and punishments, which Jehovah himself is pleased to employ, for exciting such volitions, and creating such motives in the mind, as may at least have a natural tendency to secure the practice of virtue, and the pursuit of "glory, and honour, and immortality."

## SECTION X.

THE PREROGATIVE POWER OF REASON EXTENDS OVER THE WHOLE  
RANGE OF THE CHARACTER.

IN further illustration of the leading principle advocated in the preceding pages, as constituting the main pillar of the freedom essential to moral agency, as inherent in the character of man, we observe that this prerogative of Reason extends in a manner more or less influential over the whole range of the mind and conduct of every individual possessed of the unfettered use of his faculties. This appears obvious from the fact universally acknowledged,—that when we witness any very remarkable deviation from the established laws of human character, whether it be in thought, or feeling, or action, we conclude, in accordance with the general sentiments of mankind, that such an individual has lost that mastery, which we assume that sound Reason was capable of exercising over these parts of his nature. When we see a person run into such extravagances of mind or conduct, as are utterly inconsistent with the supposition of a sane and well-ordered intellect, we consider such an one as no longer legally or morally accountable for his behaviour; we regard him as one who has lost the essential and distinctive principle of liberty, as involving responsible agency. And what is the faculty—what is the peculiar intellectual or mental operation in which we view him as deficient? In what department of his character do we consider him to have failed? In what part of the system has that

disorganization taken place, on the ground of which we no longer deem him a proper subject of reward or punishment, of virtuous merit, or of guilt and moral delinquency? It is not that any one of his affections has been paralyzed: it is not that he has lost the power to love and to hate, to hope or to fear. It is not that he has become incapable of glowing with desire, or of being infuriated with rage. The capacity of being warmed with such affections, of being transported by such passions, and of being torn by tumultuous and conflicting emotions, he may possess, indeed, in a far greater degree than was the case, prior to the melancholy catastrophe, which has befallen him. Nor is it any decay of bodily health or strength, any diminution of physical energy, for this endowment also may remain unto him unimpaired. He may, moreover, in many things, have much acuteness and sagacity. The extreme irritability and high excitement, of which he has become susceptible, may occasionally give a quickness of apprehension, a rapidity of conception, and a felicity of combination, far exceeding the usual order of his mental operations. But he has evidently lost his control over these vigorous and energetic powers. It is obvious that he cannot command them. He wants the magic wand, wherewith these mighty spirits may be laid and kept within those bounds of propriety and equity, to which, in all their movements, they should be restrained. He wants that commanding and all-pervading faculty which might cause the rest to blend their exercises in one delightful and harmonious play of operations; and that faculty, experience, ob-

servation, and the universal usage of mankind agree in representing to be the faculty of Reason. It is the loss of this, which constitutes the awful malady of mental aberration. It is the want of the due strength, or exercise of this, that occasions every irregularity in feeling and action. It is the overthrow of this that shatters the whole system of moral agency, and, to all accountable purposes, overturns the whole fabric of human liberty.

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## SECTION XI.

### THE THEORY OF SUGGESTION DESTRUCTIVE OF ACCOUNTABLE AGENCY.

IN a late extensive and, in many respects, very valuable system of mental philosophy, a theory has been advanced and developed, with great ingenuity of reasoning, and occasionally with much eloquence of style, by which the faculty of volition, in addition to many other supposed principles of the human mind, which it professedly labours to disprove and supersede, appears to me to be utterly annihilated. Among the original qualities of the mind of man, it is said by the author of the very elaborate investigation, of which this theory forms a part, that there is a tendency in one state of thought or feeling, to give rise to another, connected with the former by some tie of proximity or resemblance. This tendency to excite congenial or contrasted ideas, he terms the faculty of Suggestion, which he divides into simple and relative. That there does exist a

mysterious aptitude in one idea to give rise to another, which is related to it in the way of similitude or contrast, is unquestionable, and it has generally been referred to a principle of the mind called that of Association; but this author, by what he conceives to be a nicer and more accurate analysis, annihilates that as well as many other powers, such as those of attention, memory, and imagination, which had been considered in former systems as original elements of the mental constitution, and resolves all their phenomena into that, which he calls the faculty of Suggestion. In his reasoning upon the doctrines of the association of ideas we are of opinion that this acute and very eloquent writer utterly fails, and that his argument proceeds altogether upon a false and unwarrantable assumption. He seems to consider the doctrine of the association of ideas as involving the fact that the ideas, between which this relation subsists, must have co-existed together in the mind, in the very form and manner in which the one afterwards suggests the other, in order that this affinity may be formed, and that the subsequent suggestion of the one by the other, is nothing more than a recognition of a former acquaintance. But who ever thought of such a co-existence as necessary to the excitement of one idea or emotion, on account of some likeness or striking contrariety it has to some former idea or emotion\*? We had always considered the phrase of association of ideas as meaning nothing

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\* Vide BROWN's *Philosophy of the Human Mind*. Lect. 40, &c.

more than that one idea had an aptitude indeed to excite another, on the ground of some resemblance, analogy, or contrast, and that in the mind there was a natural susceptibility of such a combination of associate conceptions or emotions, just as the sound of thunder generally follows the flash of lightning; but, surely, without supposing that the two ideas must have before existed at the same instant in the mind. It is quite enough that the two ideas have ever existed at all in the mind, and under any modification, which is sufficiently specific to lay the foundation of a relationship more or less direct, in order to answer all the demands of the doctrine of association properly understood. Any other connexion represented as subsisting between such ideas is altogether arbitrary.

But the error, which the theory of suggestion as propounded by this author involves respecting the phraseology of association of ideas, is trifling, in comparison of the enormous length, to which it is carried in reference to the faculty of volition, and the liberty of human thought. According to the hypothesis so confidently stated, and so plausibly and eloquently advocated by this philosopher, the human mind is merely a sort of channel, through which there flows an incessant stream of feelings and ideas suggesting and propelling each other, like the particles of water in a current, or the successive portions of time, in a manner altogether independent of any exercise of Will; or to change the simile, it may be regarded as a mere mirror, which reflects in succession the various forms and appearances of things,



that by a regular law of nature pass over its surface, but utterly excluding every notion of voluntary control over any one part of the series. The theory represents it as absurd to suppose that the faculty of volition can have anything to do in the process, because before any idea can be willed into existence, independently of this established and immutable law of spontaneous suggestion, it must have already existed. It is a consequence, springing quite naturally from this representation, that, in the formation of a system of opinions upon any subject, the mind is altogether passive, and is bound to receive, with meek submission, whatever the all-controlling and unaccountable power of suggestion may deign to exhibit to its view. Difference of opinion, therefore, is a necessary and unavoidable effect, because the suggesting principle differs, in its strength and direction, in different individuals. The train of ideas, which unitedly constitutes the chain of evidence in a process of investigation, whether mathematical and demonstrative, or moral and analogical, forms and generates itself in the mind by a law of suggestion as firm and necessary in itself, and in a manner as entirely independent of any exertion of will on the part of the investigator, as any order of phenomena or physical successions established in the economy of nature. To suppose the intervention of any operation of volition, in calling into existence, in modifying the character, or in controlling and regulating the direction of this series of views, for the due rise and progress of which nature has already provided, by a law as certain

and unvarying as any process of chemical combination or decomposition, is deemed an utter absurdity, inasmuch as the slightest voluntary effort in search of any new idea, as a medium of demonstration and conviction, implies the existence of that idea already in the mind. The discovery of the relation of two remote ideas, therefore, is not owing to any peculiar faculty of finding out by a voluntary search such media of proof as may demonstrate that relation, but is altogether dependent upon the simple fact, that these necessary media happen to rise in the mind, at the proper and exact conjuncture, which fact is entirely to be accounted for upon the principle of the original law of suggestion. In this view of the case, nothing can be more obvious than that, in the process of intellectual investigation, and, indeed, in the whole range of mental exercises, the faculty of volition is altogether annihilated, except as it may coexist in the form of a wish or desire with the feelings or ideas, to which suggestion alone gives rise. It is vain to say that volition is thus combined and interwoven with the operations of the suggesting tendency, while it is maintained that every subsequent state of the mind is as necessarily and regularly an effect of a preceding state, as the growth of the physical and organic structure is an effect of that law of expansion, which was originally impressed upon the bodily constitution. The desire or delight that may accompany the development of the mental phenomena, can no more attach to them a voluntary, moral, and accountable character, than the same emotions associated with

the evolution of the bodily organs, can impart the same character to the results of assimilation and nutrition. Such feelings never can make it a virtue that the corporeal trunk should rise in an upright direction, by a well arranged superposition of particles, and that the various branches which shoot forth out of it, should form themselves into a size and shape of symmetry, because such a disposition of the aggregate atoms, constituting the physical system, is a just and legitimate object of desire; nor again, on the other hand, can they render it a vice that there should be any remarkable defect in any of these formations. When the exercise, or at least the capacity of exercising a controlling and commanding power of Will is excluded, except as it may exist in the form of an accompanying and influential appendage—as, in fact, a mere colouring of the sentiment, or emotion, the substance of which is altogether independent of it, liberty, morality, and responsibility, must surely be altogether neutralized.

And in truth the philosophy of mind is in this respect, to a very considerable extent, entirely consistent with itself. It is freely conceded, rather it is unhesitatingly advanced with much specious candour and benevolence by the author of the Theory under consideration, that diversity of opinion upon the most important points is the necessary, and, therefore, blameless result of that constitution of mind, which he endeavours to prove; and that this diversity will be in exact proportion to the diversity of strength, or weakness, or spontaneous tendency belonging to the suggesting prin-

ciple. In one man, the state of the mind is such as that without any availing, or, indeed, possible agency or intervention of Will, another state is suggested, or another idea or train of ideas called to the view, just as the state of one body is such as to grow stout, and the state of another such as to grow tall. And if choice was altogether excluded in the nature of the ideas, or the media of evidence and proof, which presented themselves to the mind, or in the measure of the influence, which these ideas exerted upon the judgment, it is obvious, that the last result—the deliberate opinion formed upon any subject, however vital and important, is equally out of the control of the Will, and, therefore, exempt from anything, which can attach to it a character of liberty or responsibility, of guilt or blame. And if opinions are thus involuntary, and, therefore, out of the jurisdiction of morality and accountability, why may not feelings, principles, actions, every element in short, which enters into the constitution of the character of man, be equally so? The class of emotions, it is allowed, quite as much as that of ideas or intellectual states, are subject to the very same law of suggestion in its various modifications of simple and relative. Upon this scheme the natural and unavoidable order of human character and conduct appears to be this—The state of the mind, at any given period, is such as to suggest certain opinions.—These opinions, when thoroughly matured, suggest principles; for what, indeed, are principles but established opinions? Principles thus formed suggest strong feelings, where

the question is such as can engage and interest the feelings; and feelings, as every one knows, when they become predominant in the mind, operate as motives, and suggest actions congenial with themselves. Throughout the whole series of these suggestions, as they relate to the character of man, there does not appear to be a single point, at which the moral faculty of volition can introduce its influence, interpose its power, and effectually break the chain. So that allowing the principle of suggestion its full sway, as maintained in this Theory, over the sentiments and emotions of every kind, virtue and vice are at once excluded from the universe. It is to no purpose to say that there is in every human breast a feeling of approbation of virtue, and disapprobation of vice, which in reality are but another phraseology for the principle of a moral sense, for this approbation or disapprobation involves the notion of some standard of right and wrong; in accordance with which the individual knows and feels that he ought and had free choice to regulate his thoughts, feelings, and actions, so far as they can be objects of a moral estimate.

The notion of "self-approveableness" as constituting the only *obligation* to the practice of morality and religion, indeed we consider as replete with absurdity, and if carried to its legitimate consequences as utterly subversive of the very basis of religion and all accountable agency. We should be sorry to charge such an intention upon the very amiable and ingenious individual, who is the author of this hypothesis, which is, indeed, very closely allied to the

theory of a moral sense as advocated by his countryman Dr. Hutcheson. That there is in human nature as originally formed, and as subsequently influenced by the established order of the divine government, a principle, which, unless grievously perverted by evil habits and circumstances, sounds in unison with the will of God as the last standard of right, we are fully persuaded. But this principle, in the present state of our nature, is far too unsteady and fluctuating in its operations, and carries too little authority in its sanctions to be regarded as forming the sole obligation to virtue. To suppose that man is accountable to no other tribunal than his own feelings of approbation or the reverse, is, indeed, to adapt the rule of morality to the varying views and susceptibilities of mankind, according to the endless diversity of circumstances under which they may be placed. When the author of the Theory supposes himself pressed with this difficulty, he is in fact forced to have recourse to the very system of utility, which he had combated with so much eloquence, as that which alone could save him from the unavoidable difficulties of his own. When he feels himself called upon to account for the fact, that a Hindoo will destroy his own parent or child with an emotion of most entire self-approveableness, and with an undoubting persuasion that he has performed a meritorious act, an act, therefore, which upon the author's hypothesis, he was under an *obligation* to perform as much as any other duty could be binding upon him; in order to relieve this deluded individual from a charge of demerit, he is obliged to represent this act, as generally considered by the members of



that community, to be calculated to promote the advantage of the whole; and what is this but to shift the obligation of virtue from self-approveableness, and to fix it upon utility\*?

It is with great reluctance and unfeigned regret that we have offered these remarks upon what we regard as the most essential and defective parts of unquestionably one of the ablest and most comprehensive systems of mental philosophy in any language. The views of the author appear completely wrong on the important questions of volition and moral obligation; and hence, his scheme is lamentably defective with respect to the great foundations of human responsibility. He seems to have no notion of obligation as any thing external, to which the voice within the breast is only required to respond; as any thing imposed by a sovereign power, with which the subject is bound to comply, so far as it is known independently of any prior notions that may have been formed in his own mind†. And hence, he never once, so far as we can recollect, makes any direct and impressive reference to a future state of punishment, by which the violation of this rule of right will be awfully resented, but uniformly speaks of death as a mere transition into a scene of the most glorious and transcendent felicity. He seems to take it quite for granted, as altogether a matter of course, that man, as soon as he has closed the present introduc-

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\* Lect. 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, &c. (vol. iv.) See also note in a former part of this volume.

† Vide Rev. ROBERT HALL'S *Sermon on Infidelity*, pp. 21, 22.

tory period of his existence, will, without the least doubt or hesitation, and without any specific reference to his past conduct, the delinquencies of which seem to have been abundantly punished in the accompanying feeling of "disapprobation," enter upon an interminable career of blessedness, resulting from moral and intellectual excellence. This is certainly a flattering view of human destiny, doubtless far more delightful and animating, than the dark gulf into which a cold and heartless infidelity plunges the human soul. But is this precisely the view, is this promiscuous and unquestioning felicity, as the universal lot of mankind, exactly the notion suggested by the Christian Revelation? A transition from the eloquent pages of this author to the no less eloquent, but more sober pages of St. Paul, will fearfully prove the contrary. On the pages of the latter, indeed, we meet with sublime announcements of "glory, honour, and immortality;" but then this lofty destiny is confined to those, who seek it by faith, and love, and obedience to the will of God; to those, who by patient continuance in well-doing, labour to attain it. But to those, who obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, are denounced, with equal explicitness of language, "tribulation and anguish, indignation and wrath." It is, indeed, quite a natural result, that when the responsibility of man has been virtually, though we are persuaded unintentionally destroyed and annihilated by a theory, which resolves all mental exercises into a process of suggestion, over which the faculty of Will has no influence or control, the sin of man, if he is capable of

sinning, should not be regarded as that heinous thing, which demands any punishment beyond the transient rebuke of a disapproving conscience. However short of this extremity the professed views of persons belonging to that school of philosophy, which we are now considering, may be, it is the inevitable consequence of dethroning the Will from that dominion, which, in subordination to enlightened Reason, it was designed to exercise over the thoughts, affections, and actions of every accountable being.

It is indeed a notion, independently of the theory of suggestion just noticed, which has lately begun to prevail in certain classes of men in this country, to a most alarming, and I am persuaded, if allowed to run into its natural consequences, most injurious extent,—that man is in no degree accountable for his opinions, and that they are the result of evidence, which he can only honestly weigh, but in no respect control or resist in its influence. This, like most other extensive and mischievous errors, is engrafted upon a great and unquestionable truth. It is, doubtless, a truth founded in the very constitution of the human mind, that when it is in a sound and healthy state, evidence of a certain kind should command its assent, and irresistibly stamp conviction upon it. It is also a truth equally certain, and necessarily resulting from the very same principles, that it cannot yield its assent where it does not perceive an adequate ground of belief, arising either from the essential nature of things, or from credible testimony and authenticated tradition. In the theory of human belief, therefore, we may consider these two points

as fundamental axioms—positively, that assent must invariably follow proofs, which appear undeniable, and, negatively, that belief is impossible, where suitable evidence is either altogether wanting, or seems to preponderate on the opposite side of the proposition offered to the judgment and understanding. We may, therefore, safely grant, that rational belief must always be in proportion to the apparent ground of assent, and, consequently, that intellectual faith or disbelief, viewed simply as an isolated act of the mind, is entirely independent of any immediate process of volition, and as such, destitute of all moral character which can be considered as involving merit or demerit. In the investigation of the media of proof, the mind is unquestionably free, and nothing can be, and in the economy of divine Revelation nothing is, attempted to be forced upon its reception upon evidence, which it is not allowed humbly and modestly to discuss. And as it can admit nothing without a proper reason, a reason of authority, demonstration, experiment, deduction, or of the various degrees of probability and analogy, so it cannot do otherwise than admit that, of which the evidence is resistless and commanding, and of which the truth at once flashes involuntary conviction upon the judgment.

This view of the case cannot be questioned without denying the competency of the human mind to conduct a process of argumentation, and to appreciate the force of evidence altogether: for, unless there be certain points necessary to its full satisfaction, and, unless, moreover, there be some fixed criteria which may be considered as the terminating

limits of doubt and hesitation, to what purpose can it be to prosecute the inquiry at all? But while we freely concede this inseparable connexion between evidence and assent in the system of human belief, as a simple and general fact, as a phenomenon of our intellectual nature, which, like many others, must be considered as a part of its original character, do we therefore mean to admit the wide and unlimited, and we do not hesitate to say, the monstrous principle, that man is not in any degree accountable for his opinions, and that, morally, it is a matter of indifference what he believes, and what he rejects, whether he acknowledges a divine Being, or is besotted enough to deny his existence? It is indeed, astonishing, that any persons of sober understanding, persons who profess to have any regard for morality and religion, should be so far blinded by the blaze of a narrow and superficial philosophy, as to allow themselves to propagate a notion, which, in its direct and legitimate consequences, is so evidently subversive of both. It is wonderful, as well as melancholy to hear, as the writer of this disquisition has heard, an individual, eminently distinguished by his learning and talents, avow in the presence of one of the most respectable assemblies in the world, that he considered it to be the fault of no man, though he might deem it to be his misfortune, to be an Atheist\*.

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\* The germ of this mischievous and antichristian speculation is unquestionably to be found in the infidel philosophy. "The civil wars which arose some few years ago in Morocco, betwixt the *blacks* and *whites*, merely on account of their complexion, are founded on very pleasant difference. We laugh at them; but I believe,

Under a pretence of proving this futile as well as most injurious notion, its advocates have frequent recourse to the analogy of the senses, and to the process of conviction, which results from mathematical demonstration. But before these processes and analogies can be of any value, and be applied with any legitimacy and propriety to questions in which moral evidence is concerned, it is necessary, that, in investigations of the latter kind, different persons should believe and disbelieve, should recognise and reject evidence with the same precise uniformity as they would agree respecting the colours of a landscape, or the relations of a triangle and parallelogram. Upon matters of mere sensitive perception or bare intellectual apprehension, where the passions or the animal propensities can have no possible interest, and where, therefore, no danger exists, that any extraneous disturbance should be given to

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were things rightly examined, we afford much more occasion of ridicule to the Moors. For, what are all the wars of religion which have prevailed in this polite and knowing part of the world? They are certainly more absurd than the Moorish civil wars. The difference of complexion is a sensible and real difference; but the difference about an article of faith, which is utterly absurd and unintelligible, is not a difference of sentiments, but only a difference of a few phrases and expressions which one party accepts of, without understanding them; and the other refuses in the same manner. Besides, I do not find that the *whites* in Morocco ever imposed on the *blacks* any necessity of altering their complexion, or threatened them with inquisitions and penal laws in case of obstinacy; nor have the *blacks* been more unreasonable in this particular. But is a man's opinion, where he is able to form a real opinion, more at his disposal than his complexion? And can one be induced by force or fear to do more than paint and disguise in the one case, as well as in the other?"—HUME's *Essays*, Ess. 7, vol. i.



the judgments and decisions of the mind, men in general believe and disbelieve alike, and they cannot often act otherwise without attempting to belie their own convictions, and without appearing unto themselves to be guilty of absurdity; and as in these cases there is little or no discretionary power to be exercised in assenting or dissenting, and no direct practical question of moral conduct involved, there is, so far, no responsibility attached to the opinion, whether negative or positive, whether true or false. But in questions of a moral and practical nature, questions which, in their various bearings, touch the conduct at every point, and are liable to encounter the collision of passions and interests, at every step, in the whole range of their discussion, and of which the evidence, moreover, is of necessity of that kind which is called probable, the case is very different. That a sun shines in the firmament of heaven, every person who possesses the faculty of vision readily grants, for, independently of the force of evidence which he feels that without absurdity he cannot possibly resist, the fact is such as cannot in any considerable degree interfere with the dictates of pride, or the propensities of passion. It is also freely conceded by most of those who can appreciate the process of demonstration and the mode of proof, that the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle are equal to each other; but, as has been truly remarked, if the admission of the principles and truths of mathematical science interfered so materially with the gratifications of human passion as those of religion are found to do, it may be seriously doubted whether

persons might not take upon them to dispute some of the clearest conclusions of that most conclusive of all sciences. It is not at all improbable that individuals might be found who would undertake to show that what had been usually considered as unquestionable axioms, and what had been generally deemed as legitimate inferences deduced from those axioms, were nothing more than popular prejudices, which the philosopher was bound to reject, in order to make way for principles of more established truth. In fact, the science of quantity itself, with all its precision, has not been without its controversies, as is evident, to instance in no other, from some parts of the protracted discussion carried on between the celebrated Leibnitz and the learned Dr. Clarke as the advocate of the philosophy of Newton\*. When prejudice, passion, and the love of fame have obtained

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\* The difficulty attendant upon those mathematical demonstrations, which involve the method of infinite series, is very plausibly stated in the following passage by Hume. "The chief objection against all *abstract* reasonings is derived from the ideas of space and time; ideas which, in common life, and to a careless view, are very clear and intelligible, but when they pass through the scrutiny of the profound sciences (and they are the chief objects of these sciences), afford principles which seem full of absurdity and contradiction. No priestly *dogmas*, invented on purpose to tame and subdue the rebellious reason of mankind, ever shocked common sense more than the doctrine of the infinite divisibility of extension, with its consequences; as they are pompously displayed by all geometricians and metaphysicians, with a kind of triumph and exultation. A real quantity, infinitely less than any finite quantity, containing quantities infinitely less than itself, and so on, *in infinitum*; this is an edifice so bold and prodigious, that it is too weighty for any pretended demonstration to support, because it shocks the clearest and most natural principles of human reason."



complete possession of the mind, they have been found sometimes so to pervert the judgment, and to blind the intellect, as to destroy the capacity of distinguishing between the plainest truth and the most palpable error; and if, in matters of science and speculative knowledge, men are thus liable, under the influence of various habits and predilections, to run into the grossest absurdities and inconsistencies, how much more likely are they to have their sentiments and opinions warped and diverted from the point of rectitude and truth, upon questions which enter with the keenest scrutiny into the whole scheme of their conduct, and bear with an awful weight of responsibility upon the whole estimate of their character. It is not more clear, or more certain, as a matter of fact, that a sun exists in the firmament, and is suspended in the ethereal expanse, than it is that there must have existed a Being of transcendent power and wisdom, who originally created that glorious luminary, and fixed it in its appropriate sphere. But it is not so difficult, and requires by no means so high an order of moral feeling to acknowledge the former of these facts as the latter, because the *one* stands completely removed from all connexion with the conduct and with the general course of the habits and affections; while the other, by the intimate relation which it sustains to human destiny, arrays against itself a host of evil passions and prejudices, which are eager to banish it from the field of contemplation, and to dislodge it from its hold upon the intellect, the heart, and the conscience. While, therefore, the

denial of the existence of the magnificent orb of day might only be regarded as an aberration of judgment, as foolish, preposterous, and absurd, the denial of the existence of Him who is the Sun of the universe which he has made, would be justly esteemed in a mind capable of estimating appropriate and adequate evidence, criminal and morally depraved.

We are at issue with those who maintain the strange and untenable notion, that man is not accountable for his opinions upon questions of theology and religion, not from any wish to cramp the freedom, and to confine the legitimate range of the human mind, not from any narrowness of idea resembling that which brought the illustrious philosopher of Florence upon his knees, before the tribunal of the inquisition, because he had been guilty of the heinous crime of discovering facts in natural science, which seemed to oppose the creed of the Catholic Church, as supported by the authority of Aristotle, but, because we are persuaded that the principle, as propagated by modern theorists, is far too extensive and unqualified to admit of its being received without absurdity as well as danger. The notion that man may embrace any principle, or reject all principles of religion, however essential and fundamental, without any derogation to his character or diminution of his virtue, must surely be seen by all reflecting minds, to strike at the very root of the obligations of religion. The source of the error appears to be this. It generally com-

mences with the assumption of this axiom of moral truth, that the mind cannot resist evidence, which appears convincing, and that it is bound to yield its assent only to such evidence; and much flimsy declamation is employed to prove and illustrate a fact, which no person of reflection can for a moment deny. But by a process of dexterous sophistry, it is immediately subjoined, that belief being thus an involuntary act, whatever direction it may take, whatever truths it may sacrifice, and whatever heresy it may adopt and cherish, is altogether free from any possible imputation of blame, so that, in fact, every principle of faith or disbelief is perfectly innocent to him, to whom it merely appears to be true, or the reverse. But surely such persons ought to consider, that it is the *state* of the mind, the previous habit and condition of the intellectual and moral faculties, which gives this appearance of truth or falsehood to the proposition rejected or believed. Let it be granted that man is not accountable for the simple act of the understanding in receiving or rejecting a principle proposed, does it follow that he is not accountable for that corrupt and depraved state of heart, from which alone such a conclusion as he has drawn in reference to that principle could have been derived? Are they such superficial investigators of the human mind as to require to be reminded that man believeth and disbelieveth in moral questions still more with the heart than with the understanding, and that there are many fundamental principles of religion which no man can

reject without betraying the grossest obliquity of feeling, and, consequently, without incurring an awful measure of guilt and criminality?

If, indeed, the principles of religion found the mind in a state as free and unbiassed by previous tendencies and susceptibilities—as prepared to give them a candid and impartial examination, and, if they make good their claim to the satisfaction of an unprejudiced understanding, to welcome them into the cordial embrace of the affections, as it generally is for the investigation and admission of the truths of physical or abstract science, then it might be granted that opinions upon this most important and influential of all questions, would be less under the control of the Will, and, consequently, would involve a less measure of moral accountability. But nothing short of an absolute and universal exemption from everything that is unfavourable to the reception of truth, can be of the least avail towards cutting off that department of the intellectual nature from a liability to the contraction of guilt. It is necessary, not only that there be a present love of truth, in general, but it is also necessary that there should be no indisposition, resulting from former habits of feeling and conduct, voluntarily indulged, for the due influence of the peculiar kind of evidence, by which that truth comes authenticated—habits which, in their aggregate effect, may be considered as having formed the character and limited the capabilities of the mind. It is necessary that no proud and overweening conceit of a superficial and arrogant philosophy should have been



harboured in the judgment, and rolled as a sweet morsel upon the tongue, until it has utterly disqualified the understanding for an equitable estimate of the claims of what must be regarded as humiliating to the dignity of man, and derogatory to the paramount authority of reason—that no corrupt passion should have been wilfully indulged, or the desire of indulging it been cherished, until its own base humour has become, as it were, the medium of refraction and transmission to every object and scene of contemplation, which offers itself to the eye of the intellect, and consequently incapacitated that eye for the perception of what is pure and refined—that no notions of latitudinarian indifference, fostered by a desire of being freed from all shackles of religion, and being allowed to pursue, without disquietude or remorse, the line of conduct which interest or ambition may dictate, should have so numbed the moral sensibilities and paralyzed the faculty of serious reflection, as to produce a total apathy to what is awakening, and an equal intolerance of what is binding—and finally, that no course of reading should have been pursued, of an inevitable tendency to darken and bewilder the mind and to produce an inaptitude for the fair and legitimate investigation of the proofs of a divine communication having been made to man, and that no association with minds of an ascendant influence and sceptical turn of thought should have been cultivated, until the whole mass of the intellectual character has now been cast into such a mould, and formed into such a firm and settled order of belief, or disbelief, upon the points proposed for

inquiry, as to render it almost entirely unimpressible by any arguments that can be advanced in behalf of an opposite and less compromising system of principles. Let this sublime phenomenon of unprejudiced and unbiassed reason be produced—this abstraction of pure intellect among the men of liberal and free inquiry, as they would characterize themselves, and we will readily grant, that such a mind, though it errs, will err without blame. Over the conclusions of such an inquirer we will allow that the Will may have no immediate control. But until such an individual be found, and we are not very sanguine in the hope of such a discovery in the present state of human nature, it is the merest sophistry to lay hold of a generality,—such as that assent must invariably be proportioned to the force of evidence, and upon this vague ground to introduce the monstrous anomaly into the system of the divine government of man, that opinions, however, rash and extravagant—however directly they may strike at the very existence and authority of a supreme Being, provided only they assume the *appearance* of truth, are completely out of the range of moral responsibility. This is just as if it was maintained, that because man is not accountable for what he does, while he is destitute of the power of rational self-control, which is unquestionably true as a general principle, he is, therefore, not responsible for the acts, which he commits in a state of intoxication. It is true, that the action simply considered as performed by one, who had no direct consciousness of what he was doing, may not involve moral turpitude, but then it derives, in a

manner, a twofold measure of turpitude from the circumstance of his having voluntarily reduced himself to a condition, which thus deprived him of the dignity of a moral being. In the same manner, although it be granted, that false opinions, upon the fundamental points of religion, may not have any guilt attached unto them simply as notions adopted upon what assumes the appearance of adequate proof, or upon the want of a perception of the proofs, which would lead to different conclusions, yet the grand verities of Christianity are so clear, so important, so paramount in their evidence and authority, that no man *can* reject them without having fallen into a state of moral intoxication, arising from some of the causes already mentioned. The operation of these or similar causes, therefore, may always be taken for granted, when opinions are formed subversive of the whole system of religion, as the instrument of God's moral government. And consequently, however blameless and irresponsible they are in themselves as exemplifications of a general principle, they involve in their grounds and sources the most awful measure of guilt and moral pravity. It is in vain, therefore, to attempt to hide the deformity of those notions under the shelter of a loose generality, because, in this instance, the very condition is wanting, upon which alone it can be legitimately applied\*.

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\* "Perhaps the most absurd and injurious adage that has ever gained currency among mankind is, that it is no difference what a man believes, if he only be sincere; now the truth is, that the more sincerely a man believes a falsehood, the more destructive it is to all his interests for time and for eternity."—*Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*. (p. 107.)

Nor are the *consequences* necessarily resulting from this theory of opinions less forcibly demonstrative of its futility and danger than the process by which opinions upon questions of theology and religion are formed. Let it be considered for a moment, what must be the natural result of admitting that the opinions or judgments of the mind do not fall under the cognizance of a moral law, and bear no relation of responsibility to that law. The natural order, in which the elements of the human character combine and form themselves into somewhat of a palpable and consolidated shape, is something like the following. Images of external objects, which Locke calls ideas of sensation, are received into the mind. These by various processes of combination, arrangement, and comparison, which the same illustrious author denominates ideas of reflection, give rise to sentiments and opinions. These views of the mind again, if they relate to objects which concern the feelings and conduct, pass into principles and established maxims, embodying the most powerful affections of the soul as their strength and support. And when the sentiments and affections, when the views of the intellect, and the feelings of the heart have been thus engaged and made to concentrate in one point, or to direct their energies in one line of operation, congenial actions are the necessary result. We do not assert, indeed, that speculative opinions are invariably attended with these practical effects. In many instances they grievously fail, where it were in the highest degree desirable that they should be accompanied with such an influence. But the con-

clusions of his deliberate judgment are assuredly the most legitimate guide, which man may be expected to follow in the regulation of his general conduct. Upon points which are necessarily interwoven with the whole course of his actions, it can hardly be otherwise than that the opinions, negative or positive, which he has embraced, should operate, at least, in some degree, in giving its direction to the general stream of the practical conduct. No man can be justly blamed for acting according to what he conscientiously believes to be right. The opposite conduct, that which is at variance with established views of doctrine and duty, must be considered rather as an infringement upon the general and natural economy of the character; and therefore failures and deviations of this kind are not to be brought forward as proofs of the innocence of any injurious notion, but, at the best, can only be regarded as some slight mitigations of its malignity. In estimating an opinion, the proper method is, doubtless, to view it as designed to be reduced to practice, where it can be legitimately made to bear upon the practice.

Let us suppose, then, an individual to have come to the conclusion, after a laborious and unbiassed consideration of the subject in his own mind, that there is no God—for this is the very case, which we have heard one of the most distinguished champions of the notion here combatted, asserting that he deemed the misfortune rather than the fault of any man. Let this be the firm conviction of his judgment, after weighing the evidence on either side of the question, with all the impartiality of which he

is master. We are not allowing in point of fact, that such a process of reasoning resulting in the negative, can take place in any instance, but we are merely arguing upon the principle of those whom we oppose. It surely must be acknowledged to follow, that such a person cannot be fairly expected to feel and act, as those who believe that such a Being, possessed of the glorious attributes of power and wisdom, of justice and goodness, does exist. Can he be justly required to love or to fear, to reverence or to obey a Being, whose very existence he deliberately, and as he supposes upon adequate evidence, disbelieves? The demand is preposterous and absurd. It is obvious, that if he would be consistent with himself, he must feel as he thinks, and act as he feels, that is, he must live as without God in the world, without any other obligations to act, or to restrain himself from acting, than those which the arbitrary laws of man may impose, and which he may, therefore, deem rather a merit to infringe, whenever his own pleasure or interest may dictate it, and the infringement can be effectually concealed. Such, we are persuaded, are the legitimate, the unavoidable consequences in numberless other instances that might be mentioned of the modern philosophic theory, that man is not responsible for his opinions. The sentiments of the mind, secretly, and often imperceptibly, slide into principles and affections of the heart; and by another transition, equally natural and easy, these feelings of the heart pass over into actions of the conduct: so that if man is to be considered as accountable for the last,



it follows that he is still more emphatically accountable for the views and emotions from which they directly proceed.

It appears, then, that the Prerogative of Reason, as directing and controlling the exercises of the Will, extends indirectly, but with a powerful and effectual influence, to the very opinions of the mind, when those opinions are such as are founded upon probable and moral evidence, and relate to matters immediately connected with the character and conduct. Through the neglect of a due exercise of the superintending power of Reason and sound judgment, guided by the light of revealed truth, notions may be embraced, involving the highest degree of guilt and criminality; and principles may be rejected, which are indispensably necessary to the formation of a devout and virtuous character. Nor can this be surprising, when it is borne in mind, that the faculty of volition, guided by reason, can produce a considerable effect upon the very senses themselves, which are supposed to be completely independent, in their operations, of almost every species of voluntary action. It is, however, an unquestionable fact, that the most comprehensive and important of all the sensitive organs is indebted, for all its useful and availing exercises, to the discipline it receives from the combined faculties of reason and volition. The most superficial acquaintance with the science of optics is sufficient to convince any one that the eye is merely a material organ, which, in order to answer its end, must be adapted in a variety of ways by the energy of the will, directed by the experience of the judg-

ment. Under this superintending influence, it readily assumes the position, and performs the peculiar function which is necessary to the particular kind of vision and perception, which the mind desires to exercise. It is habit, guided by voluntary experience, which enables the eye to adapt its focus to objects comparatively near or remote—to determine the form of objects as plane, concave, or convex—as longitudinal, circular, or angular, and numberless other points, without which the mere capability of transmitting the celestial fluid, if a fluid there really exists, to the branch of nerves constituting the retina, would be comparatively useless and unimportant. In the case of the sense of *Taste*, the same remark is applicable to a very considerable extent. At the first view, there is nothing which would seem more arbitrary, and more perfectly uncontrollable by any dictate of Reason, or any tendency and desire of Will. In the literal as well as metaphorical sense of the expression, taste is one of those susceptibilities of human nature, of the direction and peculiar bias of which it seems to be generally acknowledged that no account can be given. It seems to vindicate, in its preferences and dislikes, a stern independence, not only of the wishes, the counsels, and suggestions of others, but at first, even of the sober and deliberate judgment, and of the eager anxious desires and volitions of the individual himself. But yet, who is not aware that, by steady perseverance, by a firm and enlightened exercise of the commanding faculties of Reason and Will, predilections the most powerful, and antipathies the most decided, will learn to give

way; that the most insipid viand, or even the most nauseous drug, will, by this long course of habit, become palatable, and the most uninteresting plainness of feature assume the character of comparative beauty and attractiveness? The reason why the various emotions of taste, in the most comprehensive acceptance of the term, are in general considered so capricious and invincible, and in many cases so ludicrous and eccentric, is, that few persons have the wisdom to repress their irregular tendencies in their incipient stages, or the resolution to maintain the contest of sound judgment against them, until a complete victory has been obtained. It is always in the power of the Will, if it steadily exerts its authority, to reduce every modification of taste so far under its dominion, as to secure its accordance with the principles and decisions of Reason.

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## SECTION XII.

THE INFLUENCE OF REASON AS IT RELATES TO THE AFFECTIONS.

THE Prerogative of Reason also, as the guide and controller of the Will, extends in a great measure over the *affections* of the heart. If the opinions of the mind are subject to such a law of necessity as exempts them from all responsibility, it is remarkable that the same privilege, if privilege it can be deemed, has not been extended unto the affections also. In many speculative systems, indeed, and in some of the ordinary forms of human speech, this is necessarily implied. The affections, assu-

redly, yield themselves as readily to the impressions and influences of what is attractive, as the judgment to the evidence of what is convincing. There are in human nature susceptibilities of feeling, as well as susceptibilities of conviction; why, then, are not the former as unaccountable and as improper subjects of moral responsibility in all their diversities of operation as the latter? How are we justified in making a distinction, where nature has made none? The necessity of something like consistency in a theory, has driven some to the virtual acknowledgment that man acts, or rather is acted upon as irresistibly in his affections, as in his speculative opinions. If this, however, be granted, to what purpose is the commandment, "Thou shalt not covet?" It is unquestionable that, in the very constitution of human nature, there is a very strong predilection for certain objects, and that in these objects there are qualities, which are specifically intended to call that attachment into exercise. The attraction is thus powerful and immediate. But does this really exempt the affections from responsibility—from all possibility of guilt or blame? Whatever theoretical opinions men may form upon the question, and whatever their systems may force them to grant, in their actual estimate of human character, they maintain, as firmly as others, that the feelings of the heart, where they can be clearly ascertained, are not free from the obligations of law, that they enter even into the very essence of the punishableness of an action resulting from their impulse. And experience proves the perfect equity

of this view; for however contrary to the reason and will of an individual, whose mind is in an undisciplined and ill-governed state, the affections may sometimes run, yet it is certain that, in their general direction, and well-regulated exercises, they are subject to the entire control of those faculties. Few of the affections are generally supposed to be less swayed by the authority of the mere Will of the individual, as guided by his judgment, than that of the passion of love; and yet it is obvious, that in the great majority of instances, this affection acts in entire accordance with the decisions of reason. If it were not that intellect and volition, unitedly exerted, could control and regulate the affections, so as to prevent them from being fixed upon objects, the enjoyment of which could not be lawfully attained, and to direct them to those which were legitimately within the sphere of their pursuit, there would be no criminality attached to passions the most inordinate, and to emotions indulged in direct opposition to every principle of right, and propriety, and law; and thus the pure and wholesome streams of morality would be vitiated and poisoned in their very fountains.

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### SECTION XIII.

#### THE ACTIONS OF THE LIFE SUBJECT TO THE CONTROL OF REASON.

AND if the affections, which constitute the moving springs of human character, are thus under the control of the rational faculty, in every well regu-

lated mind, it follows, as a matter of course, that the same power, as the guardian and director of human liberty, should exercise a governing superintendence over the *actions* of the life. It is to outward actions more palpably and obviously indeed that freedom relates. If, however, the interior operations of the mind are subject to such a necessity as would virtually exclude all rational volition, it is impossible that any real liberty should belong to the acts of the conduct, for what are these acts but the affections embodied, the opinions carried into their practical consequences? If at any point of the series liberty fails and constraint is applied, the morality of everything that is immediately connected with that point is utterly destroyed. If the freedom of that, in which human freedom essentially consists, the unconstrained exercise of Reason in directing the Will to the choice of the greater good, is neutralized, the responsibility of man, as the subject of moral government, is at once annulled. If the mind is not free to think, to desire, and to love, it is impossible that the practical manifestations of these sentiments and emotions should possess that character. The moment the actions cease to be under the legitimate authority of the understanding and judgment, they cease to be properly accountable and moral; and the difference between the acts of a man, under the influence of passion, and of one in a state of insanity, is, that the former possessed the power of regulating his conduct by Reason, whereas in the latter that power was extinct.



It is, therefore, a fundamental and most injurious error in the several systems of necessity, whether philosophical, or what may be termed theological, to maintain that the mind operates under the impulse of an influence, arising either from within or without, which it can neither resist nor control, and yet that the actions immediately flowing from that mode of operation, are accountable and punishable. It is a very inadequate explanation of the case, that the actions thus punished, are performed with the choice and consent of the Will, if that Will itself is necessitated by inherent character, or by surrounding circumstances, to choose and prefer as it does. It is a very frequent and favourite method with those who are called Necessitarians, to assert that their system gives to man all the liberty which he is capable of enjoying, inasmuch as it allows him, in all cases, to act precisely as he pleases; but then if, as they maintain, he is under an absolute necessity of being thus pleased, it is only removing his disability to act as a free agent a little further out of sight. It is only hiding his manacles under a specious garb of liberty, while, to all moral purposes, he is still in chains. He must think and feel freely in order to act freely. It is not contended that man must be capable of choosing against his own *choice*, for this were an absurdity; but it is indispensably necessary to the freedom and accountableness of his actions, that they should be the result of a preference, to which his rational and intelligent nature, if duly exercised, had the power of giving the negative. If Necessitarians mean no more than that the Will

of man cannot determine itself to prefer in opposition to that, which it is already assumed that it does prefer, they surely hold no more than every reasonable man will readily grant. But their system appears to involve much more. They seem to maintain that the volitions of man succeed each other in the way of cause and effect, with the same absolute uniformity as a process of chemical analysis is carried on through the medium of a decomposing agent; so that man, in fact, instead of a responsible moral being, becomes a mere agent of this description, whose business and influence reach no further than merely to evolve those successions of thought and feeling, in the regulation and direction of which he has no discretionary power whatever. The circumstance that these ideas and emotions assume the character of volitions, and appear pleasing and preferable unto him, is a mere illusion, giving him a notion of liberty, which, in reality, he does not possess. Unless man is capable of exercising a valid and effectual control over his own voluntary decisions and actions, he is all his life labouring under a delusion, with reference to one of the strongest and most unhesitating convictions of his own mind. Not all the piety and acuteness of the excellent Jonathan Edwards could disengage his system from this fatal defect, that it draws out the sin of man through a series of causes and effects, to the operation of which he cannot choose to give a negative, and then attempts to fix its evil and enormity in its own *nature*; whereas it is obvious, as we have already

remarked, that in estimating sin with respect to its moral turpitude, it is always assumed, that it is the effect of wilful indulgence, which the individual possessed an adequate power to restrain, if he had thought proper to exercise it. Without such a power, indeed, sin might have been odious and disgusting, as wormwood is bitter, a wound is painful, and disease, in general, is loathsome, but no idea of moral pravity, or accountability, could be attached to it.

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#### SECTION XIV.

##### PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY.

THE theory of Philosophical Necessity as stated by Hobbes, as modified by the amiable Hartley, and as boldly exhibited in all its nakedness by Priestley, absolutely, and with a few slight evasions, avowedly confounds virtue and vice, sin and holiness as developed in the character of man. The last of these authors does not hesitate to affirm, that God as the framer of the constitution of nature, and of the mental system of man, is the direct author of all actions good and evil, which are regulated by the same law of necessity without any distinction whatever. Nay, he asserts with all the assurance so truly characteristic of himself, that the unhesitating admission of this doctrine is, that which must always distinguish the real philosopher from the dabbler in moral and metaphysical science, and that it is only

for want of a little strength of mind, that there is any difficulty in receiving it as an unquestionable axiom of truth, that God is to be considered as the proper *cause* of all things good and evil, natural and moral. He acknowledges with much candour, indeed, that this momentous doctrine is not to be found in the New Testament. He allows, that the Apostles were not necessitarians, and that in all probability, if the question of philosophical necessity had been proposed to them, they would have answered in the negative. But what then? The Apostles were not philosophers. To a person of his courage and strength of mind, what is the opposition of inspired men and Apostles? One of these persons, indeed, and the most highly educated among them, would in all probability have had the presumption to pronounce this "a philosophy falsely so called." But amidst so much ignorance and debility of mind, what authority could attach to his assertion? It is much safer to bow to the decisions and to do homage to the loftier intellects of the illuminati of later ages, especially when it is acknowledged, that that very sound and unexceptionable Christian philosopher, the author of *Leviathan*, is the grand patriarch of the community, the privileged individual, who had the merit first to place the system upon its proper footing, and to fix it upon an immoveable basis.

It will be freely allowed, indeed, to this intrepid writer, that it does require very considerable strength of mind to credit all that he asserts, to sustain the shock which the feelings can hardly fail to

receive from a statement so bold and startling, as that Jehovah himself, the God whose eyes are purer than to behold iniquity, is "the proper cause of all the good and evil, physical and moral," that are done in the whole universe. It certainly does demand no ordinary energy of controversial and polemical genius, no common hardihood in bearing the onset of an array of formidable consequences, to maintain the position that man is subject to one identical law of necessity in all his actions, and, whether he does good or evil, is impelled by the same insuperable and uncontrollable influence, and thus by binding "nature fast in fate," without leaving "free the human will," to annihilate all the grounds, upon which any real distinction can be established, between right and wrong; to break down the barriers which divine Revelation had raised, and the wisdom of ages had marked with the impress of its approbation, for the purpose of guarding the territories of virtue against the encroachments of immorality and vice; to destroy all that can really render man an accountable being, by reducing the whole play of his faculties, the whole range of his voluntary exercises and activities to a mere system of mechanism; in short, to strike at the first principles of the divine government in its treatment of responsible agents, and to undermine the very pillars of the moral world. To produce all these disastrous effects, or to adopt a theory, the inevitable tendency of which is to produce them, must be granted, to call for a measure of intellectual vigour, which does not often fall to the lot of man.

To digest all—I will not say the crudities, but the heterogeneous elements, the injurious and unwholesome ingredients, which this theory of philosophical necessity involves, unquestionably, and we will add *happily*, requires a strength of organs which not many are found to possess. To be serious; we do not mean to charge upon the advocates of this hypothesis any intention to deprive man of one of the noblest of his privileges, that of a rational and self-controlling liberty, and thus by neutralizing his accountableness to throw the whole weight of his guilt, whatever may be the extent and enormity of his delinquencies, back upon God himself. We are persuaded, however, that the theory of philosophical necessity, as developed by these persons, is bound to recognise—and, indeed, with a very slight variation of terms it does recognise—these consequences as its legitimate and direct offspring.

To proceed no further with this branch of the discussion, let it be laid down as an established point, that the voluntary actions of man, in order to be accountable and moral, must be subject to the availing control of his *Reason*. It appears, then, that the authority of this commanding power extends, in a degree more or less perfect and complete, to the *opinions* of the mind, the *affections* of the heart, and the *actions* of the life. And on these grounds we conclude, in addition to those which have been already stated, that it is in this prerogative of the Rational Faculty, that the liberty of man essentially consists. In this sense, therefore, as possessing a power of



regulating his own views, and feelings, and conduct, in the exercise of his Understanding and Will, man is unquestionably free. Liberty is a principle of his nature, which is no less attested by the whole economy of the divine government towards him, than by the conscious dictates of his own bosom.

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## PART II.

GROUNDLESS AND ERRONEOUS NOTIONS OF  
HUMAN LIBERTY.

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SECTION I.

## THE SUBJECT OF INQUIRY STATED.

WE have now endeavoured to show in what sense man is a free and accountable agent. We have found that liberty—a discretionary power of acting or not acting in any proposed manner in the exercise of voluntary choice, of giving the negative or affirmative of his mental preference to any measure relating to his conduct, is an essential and fundamental part of his nature, as a rational and intelligent being. We have pointed out the radical defects, the injurious tendency of some theories of necessity, as involving the utter destruction of his moral responsibility, and as calculated, by losing sight of the essential distinction of mind, reason, and intellect, as the peculiar attributes of his nature, to reduce all the exercises of his will to a mere system of mechanism. But, although some, both philosophers and divines, belonging, indeed, generally to very different schools, have grievously erred on this side of the question, by confounding the laws of matter and mind, and by requiring in the operations of both the same relation of cause and

effect, without allowing unto the latter any advantage in the origination of the grounds of motion and action; yet the error relating to the abstruse and difficult points of moral agency, and the freedom of the human will, has been by no means confined to those, who have inclined to the various shades and modifications of necessitarianism. There is, indeed, little danger that the doctrines of fatalism, and absolute mechanical necessity, should ever be very widely diffused, and very generally adopted. There is something in these theories, when carried to their utmost length, so much at variance with the first principles of the human mind, so much opposed to the conscious dictates of Reason and Intellect, so directly contrary to all that is known and felt, and so completely the reverse of what is actually experienced in the very process of volition itself, that a reflecting man can hardly admit them, without at the same time belying his own convictions; that we might almost say, he is under a necessity of disbelieving and rejecting them. Like the sceptical philosophy, they suit only the retirement of the chamber, where their advocates may dispute or dogmatize, speculate or refine, doubt or affirm, entangle themselves with the subtilties of argument or range through the lighter mazes of fancy, as may suit their present mood or habitual temperament; but in the real business of life, and in the sober estimate of character, they are forced to lay them aside, or to act in direct contradiction to themselves.

But although the errors of necessitarianism, especially that which terms itself philosophical, are more

directly opposed to the dictates of Reason and divine Revelation, and appear more deeply injurious if carried to their legitimate consequences, yet those of Free Will, in the technical and theological sense of the expression, are far more extensive in their prevalence, and, in their ranker and more extravagant forms, little less injurious to the interests of true and vital religion. To the consideration of these, as involved in unphilosophical and unscriptural notions of human liberty, we must now therefore proceed. And having already attempted to demonstrate that man is rationally and substantially free, we shall now endeavour to show, in accordance with the general plan of these disquisitions, *in what sense and to what extent man is not free*. It will be seen, in the progress of these remarks, under what limitations man may be said to be a necessary agent, without in any degree interfering with his responsibility as a rational being, and a subject of moral government. For that there are certain bounds and fundamental principles by which man is regulated in the exercise of the faculty of volition, as well as every other, must be obvious to every person of reflection. There have been those, who, in their extravagant fondness for Free Will, and the proud independence which it was supposed to bestow upon man, have endued him with a power, in the capricious and contingent exercise of which he escapes from the direct sovereignty of Jehovah, and in virtue of which he can conceal the whole range of his future actions from the penetrating ken of Omniscience. And if the former theories give man too little to capacitate him for

being subject to the penal sanctions of a moral government, this latter scheme, originating in the vanity and obstinacy of fallen nature, gives him too much to allow the Author of his being, and the Ruler of the universe, wisely and steadily to administer that government. It is not a rash and inconsiderate assertion of the liberty of the human Will—it is not a light and confident denunciation of the folly and ignorance of the Socinianism or Calvinism of those, who find it necessary to lay down some principles as limiting the exercises of volition, that will settle this profound question, or dispose of the real difficulties with which it is on every hand embarrassed. Persons who allow themselves to run on in this strain, and suppose that they have determined the point by a few superficial and unquestioned truisms, and that they have succeeded in cutting this gordian knot by directing a few violent and intemperate strokes of their controversial weapon at the network, with which their adversaries may have covered it over, have in fact never looked into it beyond the bare exterior, nor traced it through its manifold involutions.

In what remains of this discussion, we shall endeavour to keep as closely as possible to the real phenomena, and thus mark out as correctly as is compatible with our present views and capacities, the limitations within which man must be considered, without the slightest infringement upon his moral liberty, as capable of exercising the faculty of will. In this investigation, we must of course leave many points, ultimately connected with the question of human liberty, and forming as it were its ground-

work, in that mystery and obscurity, where, in common with the final and fundamental principles of every subject of inquiry, they must be allowed, at least for the present, to lie inscrutably concealed from the eye of man. It is enough for us if we can trace the subject so far as our own estimate of duty, and a correct view of our ability and inclination to act up to that estimate, absolutely require.

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## SECTION II.

MAN NOT FREE IN SUCH A SENSE AS TO RENDER ANY OF HIS  
ACTIONS UNCERTAIN.

1. WE remark, then, in the first place, that man is not free in such a sense as that any of his actions should be *doubtful*, *uncertain*, or *contingent*. It is altogether a mistake to imagine that it is an essential part of human liberty, that the line of conduct to be pursued in any conjuncture of circumstances should be absolutely indeterminable until it has already taken place. Some, in order not to infringe, as they suppose, upon the absolute freedom of the Will, but to leave it in a state of unfettered sovereignty over its own determinations, have thought it necessary to deny to the Supreme Being himself, any positive foreknowledge of the voluntary actions of man. But, surely, this is very needlessly to encroach upon the prerogative of the Holy One of Israel. It is the effect of confounding, in a very strange and unaccountable manner, the mere fact of the certainty of event, with the neces-



sity of causation or compulsion. It was well remarked by the celebrated bishop of Hippo, in illustration of this point, that the mere foreknowledge of the future conduct of free agents, however absolute and certain in itself, does no more to necessitate that conduct, and no more interferes with the mode in which the mind determines upon the performance of such an order of actions, than the knowledge of what is past can have exerted any causative influence in the production of such effects as are thus known to have taken place. There is nothing in the idea of liberty inconsistent with the supposition that the future actions of him who enjoys this privilege, should be subject to the view of one, who is sufficiently acquainted with the nature and susceptibilities of the free mind, and with the influence which external circumstances are capable of imparting, for the purpose of determining the inclinations of that mind. It is vain to say that absolute prescience involves absolute certainty, and that absolute certainty destroys the very condition upon which will can freely exercise its volitions, and direct its preferences; that of a real and discretionary power to choose either of two alternatives in a question of conduct. The real state of the case is this. In every instance in which the will of man, or of any voluntary agent, is to be exerted, there is a necessity in the nature of things, which it were absurd to deny, that he should choose on either side, that however completely free he may feel himself to be in the course of deliberation, he should determine on the negative or affirmative. There

must also be a reason, either internal or external, a reason, arising either from the influence of circumstances, or from the state of the mind itself, as originally constituted, and as modified by prior views, habits, and affections, why he should prefer that which ultimately commands his choice. However exalted may be our notions of moral liberty, it is impossible, that we should conceive an intelligent being to choose or to act without some adequate ground for such a determination of will. To deny this would be to unhinge the whole system of the human mind, and, in reality, to neutralize the validity, or even to annihilate the very existence of the faculty of volition itself, for it destroys the fulcrum upon which this mighty engine rests, an apparent and availing reason of preference. Let this be removed, and the faculty of Will seems no longer capable of being exercised. All that is necessary to foreknowledge, therefore, is merely to be able to know and to appreciate this ground of preference, whether wholly inherent in the mind, or partially supplied by circumstances. And it is assuredly casting a very serious reflection upon the knowledge and wisdom of Jehovah, to suppose him incapable of estimating the capabilities, and of weighing the tendencies and inclinations of the soul, which himself hath made. The very nature of Will supposes an alternative—an indispensable necessity of choosing either of two things or modes presented to its notice. It must, without any encroachment upon liberty, determine upon the choice of one or other of these objects, otherwise, it ceases to be a Will,

and volition is altogether excluded. All that pre-science requires, therefore, in order to make it, and the circumstances or actions, upon which its eye is fixed, as certain as actual existence can make them, is simply that it be seen beforehand to what side of the alternative the mind will really and definitively turn. And in this mere knowledge there is surely nothing, which can interfere with the freedom of the agent. It is a mere contemplative survey of what he is actually doing, or is already supposed to have done, and has no more to do with the mode, in which the act is called into existence, than if no such eye was directed towards it. It is a distinct, isolated, and immanent perception of what is effected by an agent, with the operations of which it has no connexion whatever, and to whose causative energy it does not radiate a single portion of co-operative or directive influence. It, in fact, hypothetically views, as already existing, the objects and agencies upon which it is founded. This is the order of foreknowledge with reference to the futurities, which it surveys. Like the axiomatic truths of the science of mathematics, they are assumed to have existed, or to be about to have existed, in the very act of their being known; and to a mind adequately acquainted with the principles of the mental constitution of man, the views of the past, the present, and the future, exhibit themselves with equal clearness and certainty. There is nothing, therefore, in the mere fact of the foreknowledge of actions, which can interfere with the freedom of those actions.

This, however, is unquestionable, that certainty of knowledge, whether it relates to the past or the future, implies the absolute certainty of the facts or events, which are known. If, therefore, all the actions of man are really foreknown, nothing can be more obvious than that no such contingency can belong to them as can make it in any degree doubtful or uncertain whether they shall indeed take place. The whole certainty of foreknowledge, and of the facts which are thus foreknown, arises, not from any antecedent compulsive necessity that man should act in any prescribed manner, but from the infallible hypothetical assumption that he will thus choose. Neither man, nor any other being, can be supposed to possess such liberty as that he should be capable at once of acting in two ways contradictory to each other. He must choose one of these ways. Let that way be known, and a ground of prescience is established as firm and immoveable as the most indissoluble chain of necessity, in the successive operations of his mind, could possibly form. It is, therefore, a superficial style of speaking to represent the actions of intelligent and free beings as contingent—as so regulated by accidental circumstances, as that it cannot beforehand be determined what course they will take.

A moment's consideration will be sufficient to convince us, not only of the possibility of such a prescient view of human conduct, without infringing upon liberty, but of its absolute necessity to the moral government of the world. In the physical system of the universe, it is allowed on all hands

that God hath established general laws, the operations and effects of which, throughout all the changes and evolutions of time, he saw with most minute and unerring accuracy at the first moment of the creation. It was this clear foresight into the future results of the tendencies and energies, which he originally impressed upon matter, that has secured the harmony of nature, without the necessity of continual interference with the first principles of its constitution. When we consider the astonishing forces belonging to parts of matter in a certain order of combination, and especially as attached to those huge masses of being, which roll through the immensity of space; when we think of the stupendous rapidity of their movements, and of the dreadful consequences that would inevitably follow upon any unexpected failure, or disproportion of strength, or any deviation from the ordinary sphere or relative velocity, against which no provision had been made, it must be obvious that nothing short of a perfect survey of all the capabilities, and of the actual working of the vast mechanism of the world, could have erected a frame-work so firm, so permanent, so subservient in its mutual relations and correspondencies to the stability and security of the whole. If, as one of the most delightful of bards has said, the poet must have

— an eye to catch the distant goal  
Ere yet the wheels of verse begin to roll ;

it surely must be no less necessary that the great Framers of the universe should have embraced, within the range of his comprehensive survey, the develop-



ment of every principle, and the actuating energy of every cause in the vast scheme, which He was forming. Even if the physical world, as has by some philosophers been supposed, was like a huge machine, which, after a certain period of time, would lose its original force of action, and would require, as it were, to be wound up afresh; at least, such a decay of energy, and such a necessity of renovating interposition, must have been apparent unto Him who "knoweth the end from the beginning." Without consigning the Deity to that torpor and inactivity—to that lassitude and sublime indifference to the concerns of the material universe, which Epicurus thought necessary to the happiness of his indolent divinities, it would certainly be derogatory to the wisdom and power of Jehovah, to suppose him to be under a continual obligation to meet exigencies and events occurring in the successive evolutions of his own creation, upon which he had not originally calculated.

And if in the course of the natural world, and in the government of its various elements, such a want of foresight would be inconsistent with the regularity and harmony of the system, and with our ordinary views of the character of Jehovah, can we for a moment imagine, that the most important and interesting part of the general scheme, that, for which the other was formed and instituted, should be out of the range of his universal knowledge, and hid in any of its minutest springs, from the penetration of his prescient glance? The moral world, the world of rational and intelligent agents, hath its laws, its



capabilities, its grounds and principles of action, as well as the physical; and although voluntary and accountable beings have belonging to them a most important peculiarity, inasmuch as they are allowed to regulate their own actions in virtue of the faculties of Understanding and Will, with which they are endowed; yet, if the eye of omniscience be allowed to be capable of perceiving the present operations of mind, there does not seem to be any thing to prevent it from equally penetrating into the future. It is said of Jehovah, that He "inhabiteth eternity," intimating, that His being and attributes extend alike over the whole range of duration, and that the several divisions of time are perceived by Him only in their relation to created existences. And as there does not seem to be any difficulty in the supposition of the certain prescience of the future volitions and actions of free and intelligent beings, such a knowledge must, upon the slightest reflection, be seen to be absolutely necessary to their proper government, and to the arrangement of the whole plan of their destiny. This will appear, if we consider the immense power which man is allowed to exert, not only in the formation of his own character, and in promoting his own happiness or misery, but likewise very frequently in the determination of the circumstances, the habits, and the general condition of others. Instrumentally and subordinately, man, in the exercise of his voluntary faculties and energies, does almost everything, which relates to his own character and prospects, and in this sense it may be truly said, that "man is the maker of immortal fates."

It is true, indeed, that the Will of man cannot have much influence over the general system of the natural world. Although the philosophical axiom is unquestionably true, within proper limitations, that knowledge is power, yet these two attributes in man are by no means equal in their degree, and co-ordinate in their range. He knows something of the general laws, and of the more palpable phenomena of a small portion, at least, of the vast worlds, which traverse the immensity in which they are lost. But his power is confined to the production of small, and comparatively insignificant changes, in the separate portions of that which he inhabits. He knows, or at least he supposes, upon very strong grounds, that he knows the grand principles of the motions and arrangements of the solar system. But he cannot produce the least physical effect beyond a distance, which is much less than the millionth part of the interval which separates him from the centre of that system. He could neither stop a planet in its course, or cause it to deviate one point from its track; he could neither increase nor moderate the warmth of the sun, nor quench one ray of its light, though all the energies of the species were concentrated in an individual. With all his ingenious contrivances, and his success in applying the powers already inherent in nature, he must still want the fulcrum, the point from which to bring his engines to bear, before he can attempt to alter the locality of the great masses of being, into which matter has been cast and moulded; and the proud and extravagant assertion, *δος που στω και γην κινησω*, will always be perfectly

secure against any chance of being practically demonstrated to be false.

In what relates to virtue and vice, happiness and misery, however, man certainly does possess very extensive power, and in fact, the moral government of God is in a very great degree conducted through the instrumentality of the free and voluntary agency of man. To suppose, therefore, that so great and important a part of the system should be unknown and absolutely incapable of being known unto God, until it developed itself into actual existence and operation, or to suppose any degree of uncertainty as to the events of it, would surely be creating a blank on the page of his omniscience, and a doubt and hesitation into the course of his administration utterly unworthy of all our notions of his character and attributes. It would be depriving Him of that advantage in the conduct of his universal government, the possession of which in a lower degree, is that which alone qualifies human rulers for the important and difficult functions which devolve upon them. Without a tolerable general knowledge of the manner in which men will choose to act, a knowledge acquired from an insight into their character, derived from long observation and experience, the statesman would be utterly unfit to make laws; for those laws, it is obvious, are entirely dependent for their observance upon the determinations of the collective Will. It is vain to say, under the idea of doing away with the necessity of a perfect foreknowledge and an absolute certainty of the voluntary acts of

men, that their volitions, in general, are of no importance, in their relation to the established course of the divine government. Although it may be true, in the great majority of instances, that an individual act of volition is of no particular consequence, so far as we are capable of tracing its results in its connexion with the progress of the divine administration of the moral world, yet it is unquestionable, that everything that is great and important in human affairs originates in some act of this description, giving rise and direction to other innumerable subsequent acts of a similar kind, apparently as trivial and insignificant in themselves as the first. And if the divine Being is supposed to be ignorant of the first in the series, or if any uncertainty rested upon that particular determination of the mind, if it was a contingency in such a sense, as to leave it at all doubtful as a matter of fact, whether the first will, which was to operate as a prime conductor with reference to those which were to follow, would move in the peculiar direction, which it happened, perhaps, unexpectedly to take, then, who must not at once perceive, that the grand evolution which was so materially to affect the destinies of generations yet unborn, and the management of the varied influences of which formed so prominent a part of the divine government, must have partaken of the same contingency and uncertainty? To say that, although the individual, in whose volition this important series of events originated, had chosen otherwise, yet God could have accomplished the same general

order of events, through the instrumentality of other persons, can answer no purpose. For, upon the supposition which we are combating, these persons also, for anything that could have been known to the contrary, might choose to act otherwise, so that without either a supernatural influence upon men's wills, that would utterly destroy their moral agency, or a certain and absolute fore-knowledge of the manner in which they would exercise the faculties of volition and action, it would be impossible for any scheme of importance to be planned as a part of the divine government, and to be carried into effect through the instrumentality of human power. It must be that God should have an infallible prescience of the results of the will of man, and, therefore, that those results should be certain, or that man should have properly no Will at all. Unless we dethrone Jehovah altogether from the sovereignty of the world, it is inconceivable that those striking epochs, whether prosperous or adverse, which prominently stand forth in the various periods of its history as giving their character and colouring to the ages and generations which succeed, should not have been taken into his calculation and not have formed a part of his plan. Let the conquests of Alexander or of Cyrus, let the establishment and overthrow of the four grand empires, and the various consequences resulting from those events be traced to their origin; let those mighty revolutions, which at different periods of the world have convulsed the frame of society and have given a new aspect, favourable or the reverse, to the moral scenery of half the globe, be followed up to



their first moving spring; let those tides of desolation and blood, which have so often in their primary effects overwhelmed countries and nations in destruction, but have subsequently been the immediate or indirect occasion of their regeneration to liberty and light, be accompanied with a retrograde movement, while they gradually lessen in energy and in variety of elements, and combinations, as the approximation is made towards their starting points, and they will invariably be found to commence in the quiet and retired volitions of some commanding individual, whose acts of Will were as spontaneous and undiscoverable by any eye but that of Omniscience, as those of the feeblest and obscurest of mankind. It is true that in the primary view of his character, as a rational and moral being, such an individual might have chosen to will and to act otherwise, but in the formation of the plan of providence, and in the arrangement of the whole scheme of human destinies, it was assumed as a thing well known, that he, and all his associates and followers, *would* prefer thus to exercise their volitions, and to direct their energies. But to imagine that there was any real uncertainty of the fact, whether they would thus choose, and to maintain that things might possibly, and not improbably, be otherwise, after it had already been known that they would thus occur, is to destroy everything like unity of purpose, comprehensiveness of design, and consistency of operation, from the whole conduct of providence, and the whole government of the world. One of the most important and decisive proofs of the perfect com-



patibleness of the entire freedom of man, even in his worst deeds, and of the absolute certainty and foreknowledge of the results of his volition, is, doubtless, the great fact of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. As an event, no one who professes to give the least credit to the scheme of divine revelation, can have any doubt whether it must have taken place; for, independently of its lying at the foundation of the whole system of human salvation, it is expressly stated to have been done in fulfilment of the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and yet was accomplished by "wicked hands;" the wickedness of those hands doubtless resulting from the wickedness of the wills, by which they were actuated and directed. There is no circumstance in sacred or profane history, which must have been more completely left to the arbitrary choice of those, by whom the dreadful catastrophe was brought to pass—the black tragedy was acted. To suppose any compulsive interference with their spontaneous volitions, in this instance, would involve the most awful blasphemy. And, supposing any such uncertainty, as is here combated, with respect to the results of the human Will, no event could have been more completely contingent, no circumstance more doubtful, inasmuch as no affair of importance appeared to present a greater collision of the inherent principles and passions of human nature. The real state of the case, however, is, that nothing was ever more certain, and nothing more entirely dependent upon the free and capricious volitions of man. We conclude, there-

fore, that there is no actual inconsistency between these two great facts in the government of God, and in the character and conduct of man.

How far this and other similar events may have been the objects of a positive decree, we forbear to inquire; indeed, the term decree, and, consequently, the peculiar shade of meaning attached to it, appear to me altogether technical, and as having, properly, no place in the mind of Jehovah. A decree is an instrument of human authority, obliging to the performance of certain prescribed acts, and making that a duty, which otherwise might not have been known to be such. It is, therefore, generally considered as involving some causal and necessitating influence. The divine decrees, even by the most positive advocates of the doctrine, are universally allowed to be secret and unknown to man, and, therefore, with reference to his character, they mean nothing more than a determination to act in a certain manner towards him; and the whole controversy turns, not upon the certainty or uncertainty, not upon what has improperly been called the contingency of his actions, but upon the consideration whether that determination is founded upon a previous view of human conduct, as regulated by unconstrained volition, or upon a sovereign and unaccountable will of the Deity, asserting the awful prerogative of doing what seemeth good in his sight. So far as the decree leaves the will of man uncontrolled by any such influence as would seem to destroy its nature, it resolves itself into the two elements of foreknowledge, and a determination to act upon the ground of that foreknowledge. In

this view of the term decree, a view, however, which we readily acknowledge to come short of its ordinary conventional import, it implies nothing more than a purpose of the divine mind to pursue such a line of administration towards man. And if the term foreknowledge, as expressive of that purpose, is preferable, it is not because the latter leaves any looseness and uncertainty about the results of human volition, but because it involves no necessitating interference with the operations of that volition, and keeps more perfectly clear of the technical formalities of earthly governments and authorities—formalities which can hardly fail to lead into error, when applied as measurements and adequate analogies to the plans and proceedings of the Eternal.

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### SECTION III.

#### THE LIBERTY OF MAN NOT EXCLUSIVE OF THE INFLUENCE OF MOTIVES.

2. WE proceed to remark, in the second place, that man is *not* free in such a sense as that the determinations of his Will should be independent of the influence of *Motives*. It is the circumstance of the alleged invariable connexion of the exercises of volition with motives as their commanding and regulating forces, which Necessitarians, especially those of the philosophical school, have brought forward with the greatest confidence as corroborative of their system. They have assumed it as a demonstrable fact, or rather as an axiom, which needs no demonstration,

that there is the same inseparable relation between motives and volitions, as there is between cause and effect, between any former state of matter and that to which it immediately gives rise. And as motives are suggested very frequently by external circumstances, or spring from something over which the individual has no immediate and absolute control, it is concluded that the will of man is so completely under the power of these motives, as to have no other liberty than to yield in all its operations to their resistless energy. Others, apprehending that, if there be such an order of authority and subordination as this between motives and the Will, freedom is destroyed, and necessity—the most absolute and unqualified necessity, is inevitable, have run into the opposite and absurd extreme of maintaining that the Will is not subject to the determination and control of Motives, and is capable of exercising a power contrary to them and above them. They think that motives have nothing more to do with the Will than to hold out inducements, to endeavour as it were to incline its preferences to one side of a question; but that it is altogether at its own discretion whether it complies with their solicitations, and that it is in this power of resistance its liberty essentially consists.

We cannot help thinking there must be some mistake, some mutual misunderstanding in the mode of stating their opinions between these persons, in a case where the phenomena are so palpable and obvious, and, if the process be clearly analyzed, so distinct as to render it hardly possible that any misapprehension or difference of opinion should take

place. The extraordinary contrariety of sentiment upon this point between these persons, appears in a great measure to spring from this source; that the term *Motives*, as relating to the human mind, is used in two senses, very different from each other, but, taken in their respective significations, truly applied in both the theories just mentioned. *Motives* may be either external or internal. They may either be circumstances from without, motives *ab extra*, having simply a general, and perhaps feeble, tendency to move and excite the will; or they may be *feelings* of the mind inciting to action, and in a manner constituting themselves prevailing acts of Will. In the former sense, as mere circumstances that have some tendency, and are in a certain degree calculated to call forth and to direct the exercises of the Will, there is certainly no necessary connexion whatever between them and the final decisions and preferences of that Will. If motives in this respect were resistless and uncontrollable, man would be continually exposed to the action of different and even contradictory kinds of necessity, inasmuch as a thousand impulsive strokes of this nature fall upon him from different, and often diametrically opposite quarters, every day of his life. A great part of liberty, doubtless, consists in conscious and actual discretionary power, to decide amidst this violent collision of jarring motives. There may be many motives, in other terms many circumstances, to induce an individual to pursue one line of conduct, to enter upon one order of pursuits, but there may be



more numerous or stronger motives to incline and to determine him to the contrary. He may see many reasons, which would powerfully urge him to the adoption of such a measure, if they were left to their own free and undisturbed operations; but there are counteracting circumstances, which more than balance their weight. It is not true, therefore, universally and without limitation, that external motives, that objects and events from without invariably control the preferences of the human will. They may be neutralized in their effects by other motives of the same kind, but of an opposite tendency, or there may be a sufficient energy of resistance in the mind itself, in its established principles and habits, to annul and to frustrate that measure of influence, which they are able to exert. And this is the only sense in which it seems to be possible that man should will and act independently of motives, and in a manner contrary to their suggestions. In any other view, to choose to act against motives is as impossible and absurd as to choose against choice, and to prefer a particular action in opposition to that preference itself.

Motives, therefore, in the second signification here allotted to them as emotions of the mind, are undoubtedly the guides, and even the materials of its volitions as mental states. In a process of volition, the prevailing motive, the feeling which is predominant over all others, from whatever source it may rise, is so clearly interwoven with the exercise of will, that it seems to form the very element of willing itself. To be the subject of a



motive, which is felt to rise superior to all others, to experience a decided preference, and to exert an act of will, are so closely connected with each other, are so nearly identical sensations, that there appears to be no ground, upon which they can be separated, no method of analysis by which they can properly be resolved into simpler and more distinct elements. It may be said, therefore, that the prevailing motive, as a mental feeling, is not merely connected in immutable necessity with volition, but constitutes the very act of the elective preference itself, and as such, may be considered as throwing the preponderating weight into the scale, which before may have been equally balanced. It must be borne in mind, however, that motives, as internal sensations, are generally founded upon the view of some external circumstance of direct and positive good, or of negative advantage in the alleviation of evil, which is considered of sufficient weight and importance to operate with a prevailing influence upon the faculty of volition. It is implied in the very nature of exercising a preference, that there be some ground for it. And if the sensation excited by any order of facts or any particular object was of the same relative strength, and was attended with the same commanding power over other sentiments and emotions in every instance, there is no doubt that such circumstances would act with a perfect and complete uniformity of effect upon every mind. It is, however, continually seen in the course of human life, and in the development of the principles of character, that this is by no

means the case. What operates as a prevailing motive, and outweighs with a paramount and unrivalled superiority of influence, in one instance, in another is found utterly powerless and ineffective, just as different physical constitutions and habits of body, superinduced by different modes of living, require a different kind of treatment, and the application of a different combination of medical ingredients, in order to experience a remedial effect. In the case of one person, for example, any object which promises the immediate gratification of a strong sensual appetite, acts with a decided predominance over every other consideration which can be presented to him, and thus forms the outward ground of the internal prevailing motive, and consequently his volition becomes embodied in that motive, so as in reality to form one feeling or state of mind. Let the same object offer itself to the view of another, and instead of yielding himself at once with a passive succumbency to its force, he pauses, directs towards it the eye of calm, unimpassioned reason, views it in its present meanness and fugitiveness of enjoyment and in its future consequences, and connects it with the law, by which it is perhaps prohibited, and with the misery, which it will in all probability entail. Having exercised these reflections upon it, he finds it loses all its motive energy, becomes stripped of all its attractiveness, and sinks into powerlessness and insipidity. And his Will, consequently, refuses to comply with its suggestions or fix its preference upon it. In this instance, the material of the out-

ward motive, or of the ground of the mental feeling, was precisely the same. But in its actual bearing and influence upon the mind in these respective cases, it has proved very different. In one, it operated as a prevailing motive, and enlisted the Will in its favour; in the other, it only made an impotent attempt, and was repelled from its encroachment upon the character, through the exercise of that prerogative of the intellectual and reasoning Faculty, in which we have represented the principle of liberty to rest as a part of the mental constitution of man. And it is in this view of the matter only, that the Will can be said not to be invariably influenced by motives. It must be recollected, however, that considering motive simply as an affection of mind, both these persons willed in strict accordance with its dictates. The difference was this, that the sensual man wilfully neglected to exercise his reason and understanding in such a manner, as would have effectually counteracted the influence of the first motive, by bringing other more cogent motives into operation; whereas the thoughtful and considerate man, by availing himself of this principle of his nature, was enabled to call into existence a motive, or combination of motives, derived from other views and sources, which more than neutralized the force of that which first appealed to the Will. The man of serious and reflecting mind can thus bring all the interests of eternity to act as a restraining or stimulating force, in giving a salutary direction to his volitions. But it is impossible, in the nature of

things, that he should be possessed of any such liberty, as that he can choose and determine the operations of his Will in direct opposition to those views and feelings which actually exist as prevailing motives in his own mind. To suppose him possessed of any such power, is, in reality, to suppose him capable of preferring and rejecting the same thing at one instant of time.

In the very essence and idea of a prevailing motive, it is implied that the Will has already determined freely in its favour. The conclusion, therefore, is, that no order of external circumstances to which the name of motives may be loosely and improperly given, can act with a compulsive or necessitating influence upon the will of man. But when he has already allowed them to become embodied in the predominating emotions of his own heart, and has given them the decided preference, it is an absurdity, a contradiction in terms, to suppose that he can choose to direct his volitions in a contrary order. Man, indeed, is free in the most perfect, or at least in the only availing and valuable sense of the expression, but his very freedom essentially consists in preferring and acting in undisturbed accordance with the most powerful inclinations of his own mind; and if these inclinations fall in any measure under the vassalage and captivity of the passions and the sensitive part of his nature, it is only because he has neglected, and continues to neglect, to assert that prerogative, which inalienably belongs to him as an accountable being, to control his appetites and more grovelling volitions in the

commanding exercise of his judgment, and with the aid of the more comprehensive views of his understanding.

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#### SECTION IV.

##### MORAL LIBERTY NOT REQUIRING INDIFFERENCE WITH RESPECT TO THE OBJECTS OF CHOICE.

3. IT may be observed once more, that man is not possessed of such a kind of free will as that all things should be *Indifferent* to him. The notion which some persons entertain of moral liberty, is, that external circumstances are altogether a matter of indifference, as they relate to the susceptibilities of the human mind, and that the choice of one thing rather than another, is a mere arbitrary act of the will, which out of various objects, whose claims appear precisely equal, or at least, whose power of making an impression in their favour is equal, selects one out of the number for no other reason, than that it chooses so to do. All candidates for preference are considered as occupying two opposite scales, balanced with the most perfect nicety, and the business of the Will is represented to be, to throw its determining energy into one side, so as to cause it to preponderate, without any other ground for so doing, than simply because it prefers thus to act. This notion appears to me utterly groundless and absurd. Indifference, indeed, as applied to the faculty of volition, is a most incongruous term. For, with whatever arbitrariness, capriciousness, or inde-

pendence, this faculty may appear sometimes to operate, it is contrary to its very nature, that it should operate at all without some principle or reason of preference to guide it in its elective processes. We do not, indeed, wish to establish such a connection between the acts of the Will, and the grounds of those acts, as that the former should be considered as resulting from the latter in the way of necessary consequences and effects, without the possibility of any interference or control being exercised by the intellectual and reasoning Faculty. But, although it is in the power and at the discretion of an enlightened judgment to exercise its magic influence in bringing such views of things into mental existence, in exhibiting them in such lights, and in arranging them in such an order of accurate form and proportional magnitude and importance, as would secure the Will from being enslaved and over-borne by any law of blind necessity, to which it is forced to bow as implicitly as the limb of a pair of scales sinks when its equipoise has been destroyed by an additional quantity of weight; yet as Will is not a power of the human mind, which can act independently of the other faculties, but a mere mode of thinking and feeling, the quality or distinguishing character of which, is preference founded upon some idea or combination of ideas present to the judgment at the same instant, in which the emotion is experienced, it is contrary to the very definition of the operation, that it should take place, while the objects to which it is directed, and from which it chooses, appear indifferent. Volition is a phenomenon of the human mind, requiring



an apparent preferableness or eligibility in its objects as suggested by reason, or coloured by imagination, and, perhaps, additionally urged upon the choice by affection, in order to be called into actual being, as much as motion in a body previously in a state of quietude, and prevented by the same weight of inertia operating equally on all its parts from the slightest efforts towards changing its relative position, requires some force or impulse from without to excite its capability of impression, and to urge it in the peculiar direction which it is found to take.

If we undertake to analyze any particular act of volition, we shall invariably find, that so far as its object is a matter of deliberation at all, it invariably involves as its groundwork, an order of positive and negative considerations, circumstances which have a tendency to incline to either side of the general question at issue. If these circumstances, as weighed by the judgment, appear so equally balanced as to render it almost impossible to determine on which side the advantage lies, the mind is thrown into that state of indecision, which for the time completely neutralizes the Will, and in which the reasoning or inventive faculty is busily and often painfully at work, to find out some new fact or some aspect of the case not yet duly surveyed, which may relieve it from this powerlessness of elective agency, and afford a foundation of energetic choice upon one side of the question. Pursuing our analysis still further, we find that, in order properly to excite a volition, it is not merely necessary that there should be a question proposed, presenting a positive and negative to the

choice, but that when the ground of a preference is sufficiently obvious and decided, there should be a feeling of the mind giving its clear and unhesitating acquiescence in the propriety and expediency of that, which is believed to be in itself preferable. With whatever carelessness and precipitancy the volitions of mankind in general, and of some persons more particularly, are formed, they will always be found to be the consequence of some idea suggested to the mind, or some impression made upon the outward senses. An act of Will, therefore, however thoughtless, if we may be allowed the paradox, is never without some mental exercise, without some train of ideas passing through the mind, which may be properly called thought. It is not a mere feeling, it is not a mere emotion of strong desire or preference, for which the mind can give no such account as appears at the moment satisfactory to itself; but it is a feeling—an emotion founded upon and accompanied with the conviction, illusive, perhaps, indeed, because Reason does not properly exert its discerning and controlling power, that “this is good for me.” It is, therefore, a phenomenon of the mind, it is a modification of mental exercise, which, while the external or relative circumstances, to which it has reference, continue to appear absolutely indifferent, cannot possibly exist.

And as it is philosophically impossible that any volition should take place, while outward objects, or those circumstances, with which the Will is more immediately concerned, continue to appear indifferent, and without presenting any special ground of

preference ; so it militates against the clearest representations of scripture, and against one of the leading and fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith to suppose, that all the scenes of the moral world, that all those modes of action, which constitute virtue and vice, holiness and sin, hold forth an aspect of equal attractiveness, or are viewed with equal antipathy, as estimated by the mind of man. It assuredly is not the fact, as universal observation shows and experience testifies, that all things, which present their claims and urge their eager appeals to the favourable notice of man, are possessed of the same power to engage his attention, and to incline, although not absolutely to command, his choice. One of the worst heresies, which ever sprung up in the church, was that which ascribed an inordinate power to the Will of man, unaided by divine influence, in resisting the fascinations of evil, and in fixing the regards of the mind upon what is holy and pure and good. In order to afford anything like consistency to that mischievous scheme of doctrine, which was set up by Pelagius, and has prevailed, in its main principles, in its spirit and essence, in a degree more or less in every age of the church, it was found necessary, in order to support the extravagant notions which it entertains of the freedom of the human Will, that the great fact of the awful and deplorable degradation from moral purity and rectitude, which has evidently befallen our nature, should be virtually denied. If moral good and evil, obliquity and uprightness, purity and turpitude were precisely upon the same footing with respect to any inherent power of producing an impression

upon the Will of man, it must follow, that every single act of preference, whether directed to what is excellent or what is base, must take place without any perceptible ground in the object of choice, and, therefore, that the Will is not only free to choose both what appears desirable to the unreflecting feelings, and what Reason sanctions as such, but that it is even free to prefer without any imaginable ground, without anything in the objects themselves, on account of which it fixes itself upon them. Such capriciousness of liberty is more preposterous and unmeaning, if possible, than necessity itself. It is an utter mistake to imagine that an indifference in the objects, to which it is directed, is essential to the moral freedom of the human Will, and that such an equipoise belonging to their capabilities of impression is necessary to his responsibility as an accountable agent. It is true, indeed, that since the fall, man has lost, to an awful and deplorable degree, his inherent love of moral excellency, and that his susceptibility of evil impressions is become far more sensitive and acute; but then he has not lost his love of the greater apparent good, nor altogether, if he properly employs his faculties, his original power of discerning it. Although good and evil, therefore, morally considered, are far, very far from being equally indifferent to him, the absolute fact being that the latter is more attractive to him than the former, yet as no compulsion is applied to the Will, as it requires only calm reflection to perceive that the choice and pursuit of vice are absolutely inconsistent with peace and safety, security and blessedness, there is quite enough in this

consideration connected with man's unalterable love of the greater good, to preserve him from that slavery, from that utter destruction of his character as a moral agent, which his innate love of sin and hatred of holiness would seem at first sight to threaten him. There is nothing more necessary to the constitution of his moral freedom, than that, by a due exercise of his reflecting faculties, he may have it in his power to summon into view such scenes of future and eternal destiny as may more than balance the evil tendency, which is now, unquestionably, a part of his nature. Since the melancholy catastrophe which has universally befallen our species, the exercise of the Prerogative of Reason, as the fundamental principle of human freedom, has become, indeed, much more difficult than otherwise it would have been, just as we find it to be with the man who has become besotted with sin and vice. A measure of slavery of Will is, in such a case, a penal judgment, because the individual has absolutely sinned away his freedom and the command exercised by his intelligence. And it is only in the sense of a strong tendency to evil, superinduced by the fall, that the expression, which we often hear, is true, that man, since that fatal period, is "only free to sin." In any other application to the will of man, it is erroneous and unmeaning. While man continues in a state of probation, he can never wholly lose the required prerogative of his Reason. Although the objects of the Will are not and cannot be indifferent, yet there is no such irresistible tendency to any object, as that a clear view of the greater good may not and ought not to overcome it.

It is in a state of future recompense only, that the love of evil in the condemned, and that of good in the blessed, will constitute a species of moral, though not a physical and absolute necessity, binding them severally to the states to which they are respectively consigned.

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## SECTION V.

### RECAPITULATION.

THESE appear to me to be the chief limitations, under which it is indispensably necessary that we should estimate the character of man as a free and responsible agent. It is as essential to a correct scriptural and philosophical view of the subject, that these boundaries and qualifying considerations be marked out, as it is that the great fact of liberty, as the groundwork and foundation of the whole scheme of responsibility and moral agency, should be distinctly asserted and firmly maintained. It is equally possible to err on both sides of the question; and we are persuaded that warm and violent partisans have most grievously erred, one class in representing the faculty of volition as sunk into such a state of bondage and impotence of elective agency, or as bound in its operations to such a series of mechanical and concatenated influences, as to have the inevitable effect of encroaching upon real, practical, and equitable accountability of character; and another, in ascribing unto the Will of man such a preposterous and inordinate power of self-determination, as is inconsistent



with the sovereignty of God's purposes, with the universality of his knowledge, and the established order of his government, and utterly at variance with the very nature of the process of volition, and with the actual condition of the species, as demonstrated by the most unquestionable experience. In the preceding discussion it has been our object to hold a middle course between these opposite extremes, and, by observing the oscillations of error, to fix the index of its tendencies, as nearly as our present faculties and means of knowledge appear to admit, upon the unvarying point of truth. It may be that, in this difficult and abstruse problem of moral investigation, like some of those questions of mathematical inquiry, of which the exact and definite limits cannot be distinctly fixed, and the method of infinite approximation is consequently substituted in their stead, we must be content with an approach to truth. In the principles, which have been here laid down and attempted to be illustrated, we have endeavoured to keep the eye upon the actual phenomena of the mental constitution, as they develop themselves in the operations of the Will, without deviating from those views of conscious belief in reference to this point, which form a part of our very nature, and without encroaching upon those representations of Scripture, which can never be at variance with the clear and fundamental dictates of that nature. And in bringing this discussion to a close, it may be useful, in order to a clear view of the general train of argumentation which has been pursued in it, to exhibit a brief summary of the principal views, which

have been advanced, and of the order in which the reasoning has been arranged. By means of this analytic process, the connexion of the whole will be more easily perceived, and the force and validity of the several component parts will be more accurately ascertained.

As the first and most remote analogy to the operations of Will, we noticed the continual motion, the ceaseless action and reaction, which prevail throughout the system of nature. We proceeded to remark that some of these phenomena are evidently the effects of voluntary choice, others the results of mechanical and inherent forces and susceptibilities, but involving no exercise of perception, thought, or feeling; and that this difference in the mode of producing motion, and of performing actions, lies at the foundation of the whole question of liberty. In further illustration of the general process of elective agency, as displayed in the various departments of the physical, animal, and intellectual and moral world, it was observed that the first and lowest modification of preference displayed in nature, is that of *Simple Tendency* to one kind of action, and to one direction of motion rather than another, as exhibited in the several phenomena of magnetism, crystallization, and chemical affinity, and in those mechanical forces which the Creator originally impressed upon matter, or willed to be a part of its very being, and which are found to pervade the whole economy of Nature. It was, therefore, stated to be a groundless and inadequate view of matter, as a substance created by

the Divine being and endued with certain qualities, requiring only certain collocations and arrangements to be called into operation, to represent it as totally inert and destitute of all power of action and reaction. The next stage in the gradations of the elective process was shown to be that of *Sensitive* preference, in the exercise of which all living and *Sentient* beings feel inclined to some actions and objects, rather than others. The third and last in the scale, of which we have any knowledge, is that of *Rational* choice, upon the ground of motives suggested by the understanding, and rendered availing through the native and inherent susceptibility of the being, who thus prefers. This was seen to be the peculiar kind of liberty belonging to man, the mode of exerting his volitions suitable to a being placed in accountable circumstances, and a subject of moral agency. Assuming this to be the distinctive circumstance, characteristic of the mode in which man exerts or is capable of exerting his preferences and voluntary determinations, we proposed it as a first object of inquiry, upon what ground and to what extent man is to be considered as free; in other words, what is essential to the Liberty of moral agency. With a view of ascertaining and illustrating this important point, we proceeded to lay down certain indispensable requisites and first principles of moral liberty as founded upon the exercises of volition. The first of these is Life, accompanied with sensation and intellect, in opposition to the condition of inanimate beings, which are obviously not qualified for moral agency. The second is a sus-

ceptibility of enjoyment and suffering, as otherwise there would be no adequate ground of preference, and the operation of rewards and punishments, as the instrument of moral government, could have no place. To this circumstance the origin of evil was traced, inasmuch as a *Possibility* of offending and suffering is an absolute and necessary part of every form of government. Evil, as the only alternative of a wrong choice, of an improper exercise of discretionary power, was shown to be of the very essence of responsible agency, and therefore, the capacity and possibility of suffering extend to the highest angel in heaven as well as to man upon earth. To this was added, as a third principle, an invariable Desire of the Greater Good, when properly presented to the view and duly appreciated by the understanding. These three properties, or endowments, every moral and responsible agent—every being that is accountable for the exercise of his volitions, must possess as the very first rudiments of his character. In the application of these principles to the determination of the extent of human liberty, and the illustration of the method of human volition, it was shown that in man there is a paramount and commanding faculty of Reason, the business of which is not to urge him to prefer and to act in opposition to the original elements and tendencies of his nature, but to direct his Will to the choice of such things as will prove permanently conducive to his highest good,—to arbitrate between the different kinds and degrees of good, and to engage him in the pursuit of that, which is, on the whole, best

adapted to his character, and best calculated to satisfy his desires.

It is this Prerogative of Reason, therefore, on which the liberty of man, as a responsible moral agent, may be considered as depending. This was shown to be the case, in the first place, because those persons are never viewed as proper subjects of punishment, in whom Reason is not in a state to exercise this dominant influence and salutary control, as is evident from the estimate formed of the actions of infants, and of persons labouring under mental aberration. It was next stated, that the rational or intellectual Faculty has the power, as demonstrated by daily experience, to excite new volitions, by exhibiting actions in their real character, and by following them to their eventual consequences—volitions quite different from those which would have arisen in the mind, if the same faculty had been listless and indifferent. It was, thirdly, maintained, that, in the economy of the human constitution, this Prerogative of Reason, when duly and vigorously exerted, extends over the whole range of the character; over the views of the mind, so as effectually to prevent the adoption of such profane and impious notions as are at variance equally with the evidence of intuitive belief and demonstrative science, with the law of Nature and the principles of Revelation; over the affections of the heart, so as to direct them in their exercises and attachments, and to allow them permanently to rest upon those objects only, upon which they may be legitimately and suitably placed; and, finally,



over the actions of the conduct, so that they are to be morally estimated, to be considered as proper objects of reward or punishment, just in proportion to the degree in which Reason exerted, or was capable of exerting, its authority in their regulation. In the investigation of this last head of argument, several theories and hypotheses fell under our consideration, especially that of Suggestion, as totally neutralizing the influence, and even annihilating virtually the very being of any voluntary power over the series of thoughts and feelings, which successively and spontaneously rise in the mind—that of the unaccountableness of speculative opinions—that of the evil of sin as consisting simply in its own nature, without any reference to the manner in which it is produced—and, finally, that of philosophical Necessity, which utterly confounds good and evil actions, binds them together, and attaches them to the human character with the same chain of destiny, and makes God the author of both alike.

While, however, we considered the Prerogative of Reason above the subordinate faculties of the human mind, as that which forms the main hinge, upon which his Liberty and his capacity of moral agency turn, we by no means wished to give the idea of such extravagant and inordinate power and efficiency as belonging to this faculty, as is inconsistent with the real economy of the mental constitution, and would seem to supersede the absolute and indispensable necessity of divine grace, in order effectually to subdue the perversities of the Will, to purify the affections, and to mould the character. We pro-



ceeded, therefore, to the Second branch of the general question, and endeavoured to point out in what sense man is *not* free, and to what extent he may be considered a *Necessary* agent, without in the slightest degree interfering with his accountability as a *Moral* agent. And in the prosecution of this investigation, we found that man is *not* free in such a sense, as that any of his actions should be doubtful, uncertain, or *Contingent*, inasmuch as this would be utterly inconsistent with the comprehensive and harmonious plan of the divine government; neither, secondly, is he free in such a sense as to be exempt from the commanding influence of *Motives*, considered as emotions of the mind, and not mere external circumstances, to which that designation is frequently applied. Volitions are so uniformly connected with prevailing motives, as to become in a manner identified, and to form one elective state of mind. And, finally, it was shown that it does not form a part of human liberty, that man is not in such a sense free, as that all actions, good and evil, virtuous and vicious, holy and profane, should, as Pelagians, and other heretics have maintained, be Indifferent to him. So far is this from being the case, that a preponderance of spontaneous attachment to Evil was the inevitable consequence of the lamentable degradation which he has experienced, and becomes strengthened in the way of penal judgment by every instance of wilful additional indulgence in sin, thus opening a way for the operations of a divine influence graciously vouchsafed to his aid, without, in reality, destroying the leading feature of his character as a

moral, accountable being. Under these limitations, therefore, man is Free. Such, so far as we can trace it, appears to be the order of the mysterious operations of the voluntary principle in man—such the sublime economy, which the infinite Creator hath been pleased to establish as best calculated for the purposes of a moral government. We have forborne from entering at length into the opinions of heathen philosophers and the Fathers of the Christian church, upon this great question, because their sentiments in both instances, for the most part, were exceedingly vague and indeterminate, and often inconsistent with themselves. The sect of the Stoics, it is well known, held the doctrine of a fixed fate, though it is, at the same time, by no means easy to ascertain the precise meaning which, in general, they attached to this term. Others of the ancient philosophers held that the intellectual and moral constitution of man is a species of *syncrasis*, a mixture of liberty and necessity. In the treatises of St. Bernard, St. Augustine, and others of the early fathers, there is but little of what is satisfactory upon this inquiry. Their discussions are loose and rambling in the extreme. Many valuable and solid observations are, however, scattered over their pages, and the general drift of their reasonings and illustrations seems to be, to prove the freedom of the human Will on the one hand, and the necessity of the aid of divine Grace on the other, thus laudably endeavouring to enforce the obligations of piety and virtue, and, at the same time, to demonstrate the absolute gratuitousness of all the blessings of salvation. Overlooking, however, the opinions

and hypotheses, which have prevailed at different periods of the history of the church and of the world upon this point, we have endeavoured to state the truth as it unfolds itself in the invariable phenomena of the mind itself, and to mark out the leading principles of that wise and beneficent moral economy, of which the existence of Evil appears to be an inseparable appendage, but a vast preponderance of good cannot fail to be the ultimate issue.

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## BOOK III.

### THE CONSCIENCE VIEWED IN CONNECTION WITH THE SENSE OF DUTY AND THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE MORAL LAW.

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#### SECTION I.

##### THE ORIGIN OF THE NOTION OF DUTY AS CENTERING IN THE CONSCIENCE.

INDEPENDENTLY of any design or effort of my own, I find myself surrounded by an order of circumstances, in which certain habits of mind and conduct are indispensably necessary to my happiness. I am placed in the midst of a system of physical and moral influences which, like so many radiations of light and heat either emanating directly from their source, or reflected from other objects, incessantly act with more or less force upon the views of my understanding, and the feelings of my heart. To date the commencement, and to trace the respective and minute effects of this combination of elements, as they progressively develop themselves in the character, were indeed as much beyond the range of possibility as to apply a similar method of analysis to the precise mode and extent, in which food and atmospheric influence act upon the animal principle in the process of organic formation. It is perfectly apparent that, for the evolution of the exquisite machinery of the

bodily frame, both of these materials are necessary, but by what means they are limited and controlled in their tendencies—by what order of correlative operation they are aggregated into the coarser masses, or elaborated into the more delicate instruments of the system, entirely escapes our observation. Thus, in our intellectual and moral nature, we can easily discover the aids and influences, by which our mental principles are modified and evolved in their aggregate effects; but to mark out the exact point at which the progress originated, and to recognise distinctly every successive step, by which the inherent susceptibility was unfolded, until it has assumed the form of an established maxim of the understanding, is a task, for which our present faculties are by no means competent. The grand tendency, however—the obvious bearing and design of circumstantial influences, as they relate to the human mind and character, may be as clearly ascertained by observation and experience as the assimilating properties of matter in its effects upon the animal frame. In estimating any principle or propensity of our nature, therefore, it is unquestionably right to take all these considerations into the account, without for a moment losing sight of the fact, that there must have been an original capability of impression and expansion, otherwise no principle could have been evolved—no maxim consolidated. It seems that, in the investigation of the moral, as well as the intellectual elements of the nature of man, as they are exhibited in the comparative maturity of social life, philosophers have too much

overlooked the correlative bearing which exists between him and the system, in the midst of which he is placed. Hence, some have viewed the great axioms of the understanding, and the fundamental principles of the conduct as naturally engraven upon his mind, and as there standing out in legible prominence independently of all instruction or experience. They represent them as so many members of an intellectual organization either immediately created by the hand of Deity, or put forth by the mind itself in the exercise of its own independent energy. Others have run into the opposite and more dangerous extreme of making man altogether the creature of circumstances and external influences.

In opposition to these theories it must be maintained that man combines in his character as much as is correct in both, but derives all the habits of his intellectual and moral being in the mode assumed by neither. He is unquestionably possessed of an individuality of personal existence—of responsibility—of thought and of feeling—of a susceptibility of happiness and of misery; and therefore it is necessary that he should be possessed of a power of combination and reflection perfectly distinct from the mere result of sensitive influx. The design of this power is, however, not to evolve principles of thought or action by any isolated exercises of its own, but to work out the various materials, with which it is supplied, by its constant and never-ceasing correspondence with the things which are without, into the boundless forms of truth and moral excellence.

In endeavouring to discover the first germ, and to



mark the incipient development of the notion of duty in the human mind, it is important to observe, that man was not only made for society, and therefore was endowed with capabilities of thought and feeling adapted to that condition, but that also since the first creation of the species, he has been invariably trained up amidst some of the habits and associations which that state of being implies and absolutely requires. It is indeed as impossible as it would be useless to exhibit a view of the naked powers and susceptibilities of his mind apart from the education which they have received amidst that unceasing play of influences and occasions which have been radiating and operating upon him throughout the whole period of his existence. These circumstances were, in fact, as necessary to call forth the intellectual and moral principles of his nature, as colours and sounds, and tactual impressions were to awaken the external senses into conscious and efficient operation. No one, perhaps, except the Epicurean Atheists of old, has doubted that the eye was made for seeing, and was framed in accordance with the established laws of the physical world, with a peculiar aptitude for that function\*. The same remark is equally applicable to the ear in relation to the sensitive act of hearing, and to all the other perceptive inlets of the human frame. But however curious and exquisite may be the workmanship displayed in these organs—however clear and unquestionable may be the impress of specific

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\* *Lumina ne facias oculorum clara creata  
Prospicere ut possimus.*—LUCRET. lib. 4, v. 824.

design and consummate wisdom, which they bear, it is obvious that without a correlative order of external objects and events, and even without considerable exercise and reflective experience, they would be utterly useless and unavailing. Upon the sentient organs, indeed, material impressions are productive of an effect similar to that of the beams of the morning sun upon the harp of Memnon, or of the breeze which sweeps its chords upon the melody of the *Æolian* lyre. Touched by appropriate influence, the string that was before silent, at once awakens into sound, and is found to "discourse most eloquent music." Strictly analogous to these effects, appears to be the mode in which the various faculties of man, whether they be sensitive, intellectual, or moral, are called into action by the numerous train of suitable circumstances with which they are surrounded. Nor does this view of the subject lead to the slightest encroachment upon the spirituality and integrity of the mental principle—upon the responsibility of man, and the certainty of moral distinctions. It only exhibits our nature as placed in the midst of a vast range of influences which afford the best possible opportunity for the development of its powers—the excitation of its susceptibilities, and the salutary direction of its moral energies.

To analyze an aggregation of emotions and ideas, which have already been consolidated by slow and imperceptible accumulation into the texture of first principles, especially when the elements are so subtile and evanescent, and so recondite in their mode of combination, is obviously a task of extreme difficulty.

Like the strata of massive rocks in the arrangements of geological formation, which were deposited from a liquid, the great facts of mind which present themselves to the superficial observer as the original and unmodified constituents of its very being, as it came forth from the Creator's hand, will be found on closer inspection to have assumed their existing form in obedience to the progressive operation of laws of mutual influence and association as invariable as those of crystallization or cohesion. In the case of the moral phenomena the difficulty is much increased by that principle of derangement, which we know from infallible authority, has gained entrance into the system, and has disturbed that beautiful harmony of mental operations, which originally distinguished the great masterpiece of creative wisdom. Like one of those maladies which run in a hereditary line through a succession of families, and which have a continual tendency to impair and undermine the salutary economy of the physical constitution, this insidious evil has mingled itself with every element of our being, and prevents that free and well-proportioned evolution of mental capacities and endowments, by which our character was designed to act in unison with the whole system of the universe. The great laws of moral government, however, as originally established by supreme wisdom and goodness, still remain unaltered, and as administered by their divine Author in the several departments of providence and grace, have a continual tendency, like a species of *nisus nature*, to correct the aberrations of passion and sensitive function, and to restore that

delightful equilibrium of the desires, which constitutes the glory and happiness of every rational and responsible being. The law of nature as imposed upon the first founders of our race, and as constituting the great bond of the rectitude and well-being of the intellectual universe, was not abrogated or in any degree weakened by its original violation. It was, indeed, in order to vindicate and maintain it in all its integrity that the restorative system was instituted; and that plan may be considered as a branch of the great scheme of government, by which Jehovah binds together the whole community of his intelligent creatures in an identity of interest and of happiness as arising from obedience to himself. If such, then, be the design of the beneficent Author of our being in all his dispensations towards us, to raise us in thought, feeling, and conduct to that standard of excellency, which had its original in his own nature and which he has prominently embodied in all the works of his hands, it is obvious that we must regard the several departments of his government as so many successive steps, by which, in accordance with the exercise of our native powers, we may attain to this object. Hence we find that the means, which he has appointed to bear upon our character, are strictly adapted to our nature and beautifully harmonize with the development of our faculties. But amidst all the variety of these means they uniformly tend to the same object. In subserviency to this purpose we find man in the very first stage of his existence possessed of a capacity of physical enjoyment and suffering—of pleasure and pain. This is

the foundation of his moral education; and it is in obedience to the natural impulse, which craves for gratification and shrinks from the opposite emotion that his notions of conduct are first formed. Who has ever witnessed a child in the first stage of infancy abstaining from any object of delight within his reach, or willingly submitting to any process of pain and self-denial under an idea of the rectitude and propriety of such an act, or from any instinctive propensity amounting to what has been called a moral sense? It is obvious that at such a period the child thinks only of what is agreeable and gratifying to itself. As, however, its powers of observation and experience begin to expand, and the results of the exercises of benevolence and self-denial, which within certain limits are essential to any measure of happiness and security in a social state, are instilled into its mind, it learns to think it right to extend its views somewhat beyond its own present physical enjoyment, for otherwise happiness could not upon any scale exist. From the delight which it derives from pleasure of every kind, it by degrees comes to regard happiness or enjoyment as a positive good, and therefore as inherently desirable. Hence every mode of conduct, which experience has shown to be, on the whole, calculated to promote happiness, is viewed in the same light. When the idea of rectitude or justice has been once gained as a relation inseparably connected with a benevolent constitution of nature, that of duty necessarily springs out of it. In whatever manner it is supposed to be right that I should act towards an individual, it is at once per-

ceived and felt that it is my duty thus to act towards him.

It is not to be supposed from the preceding view, that in forming the notion of Duty, every individual enters into an arithmetical calculation of the good which will result to himself or others from any particular line of conduct any more than in learning to see he mathematically estimates the angle under which an object presents itself to his view. In both processes there is a gradual and therefore unobserved approximation towards the judgment which is formed, and a concurrence of a great variety of associate means and influences tending to the same point. In a state of society there are maxims of Duty and rectitude afloat, which have justly assumed the character of moral axioms, and which under certain modifications are inculcated upon every new actor upon the stage of existence, and which his own observation, as well as every higher light which he may enjoy, combines in convincing him to be as lasting as the frame of nature, or rather as immutable as the Author of nature Himself. These maxims, like the hypothetical truths of geometry, or the rules of grammatical construction, did not however exist in the mind in the form of specific and isolated facts previously to all experience and investigation into the nature of things. They are rather the great generalizations, which had indeed their germs in the inherent susceptibilities of the mind, that were unfolded into conscious and recognized existence like the statue out of the block of marble, by the exercise of reason and observation upon the



condition of external things. In this view they may with the most perfect propriety be considered as innate, inasmuch as they require only the circumstances of social life conjoined with observation and reflection to be elicited into necessary existence. The great evangelical maxim, for example, that we should do unto others as we would have them do unto us, which constitutes the sublimest and most comprehensive formula of social obligation ever exhibited, although it had not been embodied in lucid expression, until it was enounced by the Saviour of the world, yet was inscribed with equal certainty upon the very altar-piece of nature; and after the light of heaven had thus beamed upon the obscurity of its characters, it is seen to be the governing principle of the whole social compact.

In the formation of a scheme, nothing is more decisive of the wisdom and skill of its author than the maintenance of a universal subservience and co-operation among all its constituent parts. In the composition of an epic poem, which is considered one of the greatest efforts of the human mind, it has been remarked that such should be the relative symmetry and dependency of its materials, as that not a single adventure or episode could be added or withdrawn without deranging the machinery or deforming the superlative beauty of the whole. In the vast system of the natural world, so far as it has been brought under human observation, it is well known with what consummate accuracy this principle has been acted upon—with what amazing precision every mechanical force and every chemical combination has been bal-

anced and adjusted, with a view to the permanency and security of the universal frame. And although our knowledge of intellectual and moral operations be of necessity somewhat more indefinite and obscure, yet there can be no doubt that there is the same unity of design—the same relation of co-operative influence maintained throughout the whole range of the divine government. In this view of the question before us, it appears to me that our notion of Duty arises not from any single and specific source internal or external, but is the combined result of a variety of relative influences. We have in our own nature an implanted desire as well as a capacity of happiness. The first exercise of this instinct necessarily tends towards ourselves, and centres in our own enjoyment—operating in a manner analogous to the principle of attraction in the system of material nature. This, however, if left to its own uncontrolled energy, would be inevitably destructive to the whole, and hence another force has been introduced in the scheme of physics denominated repulsion—in that of morals it may be called an expansion of benevolent impulse continually urging the exercise of a due regard to the happiness of others. The line of motion traced in obedience to these twofold influences is justice or rectitude—that function of our moral nature, which consists in giving every one his due, forming as it were the equitable arbiter between individual and social interests—the guardian of personal and relative rights and the balance of the rational universe. It is from this combined influence of internal instinct and external

relation that the notion of Duty primarily rises in the mind. It is not an axiom of moral quantity legibly inscribed upon the tables of the heart prior to, and independent of, all observation and reflection; for in its very nature it involves a considerable and comprehensive estimate of relations. It does not arise from the mere contemplation of the injunctions of resistless power; for although the menaces of power may enforce obedience, they can never, in accordance with the genuine principles of our nature, create a sense of obligation. It is not the result, in its elemental state, of the disclosures of a divine revelation, for it is obvious from the pages of Aristotle and Cicero, that a notion of Duty as clearly, though not so accurately and comprehensively, existed in the view of the heathen as in the more enlightened estimate of the Christian. We must trace this important idea, therefore, to a prior date, although it was never adequately sanctioned nor recognized in its full extent, until the light of celestial truth disclosed its more remote relations. In its more simple and primary form it is a corollary, which necessarily arises from that moral demonstration, which the whole face of nature and of society exhibits to the eye of reason. And it is a very remarkable proof of the wisdom and beneficence of the Author of our being, that we are so constituted as that what the understanding pronounces to be right, the heart cannot fail to recognize as agreeable to its most native instincts. In the economy of nature indeed, it is seldom that what is necessary to our well-being, is not gratifying to our unsophisticated feelings and

propensities. Thus it is that our duty and our happiness have been inseparably connected—producing by their correlative action that beautiful equipoise of character, to which in the present state indeed, we can only approximate. But when the disturbing elements, which have gained an entrance into our nature, shall have ceased to operate, then the union will be perfect and complete. Then every principle will act in harmony with all the duties and relations of our existence, and what our judgment will pronounce to be right, the heart will have already felt to be delightful.

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## SECTION II.

### ON THE STANDARD OF DUTY AS THE AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE OF CONSCIENCE.

HAVING thus endeavoured to trace our notion of Duty to its source, and exhibited it as the result of the instinctive susceptibilities of our own nature, directed and controlled by the established order of social life, as well as by the light of divine revelation subsequently vouchsafed, we proceed next to inquire more distinctly what constitutes the authoritative and ultimate standard of Duty. Although a general idea of obligation as binding to certain habits of feeling and conduct has always prevailed in the world, it is well known that the views of mankind upon the subject of Duty, have in different ages and communities considerably varied from each other. Some have gone to the length of denying the certainty of moral distinctions altogether, and maintained that the

standard of Duty is nothing else than a capricious imposition founded upon no fixed and permanent basis, and liable to be changed and modified by every peculiarity of mind, and by every order of circumstances. Others have placed the tribunal of Right in the mind itself, which, as they maintain, invariably declares its decisions in the dictates of conscience—in the perceptions of the moral sense—in the homage of congenial Emotions as sympathizing with other minds—or in the feelings of self-approbation as universally accompanying what is honourable, and just, and good, and in the compunctions of remorse as inevitably associated with the reverse. A third class has connected the claims of Duty with the mere calculations of Utility—limiting their views of what is essentially right by their estimate of what is personally advantageous. Others, including Hobbes and his followers, make the institutions of society—the laws of the civil magistrate the alone standard of Duty; and according to this theory, the ordinances of the state not only define the limits of social obligation, but constitute the very groundwork of the whole scheme of morality and virtue. Lastly, it has been held by others that the rectitude of actions is entirely founded upon what has been called the arbitrary Will of the Supreme Being, and that the knowledge of that Will is to be exclusively found in the written Law, which therefore, independently of all prior or collateral considerations, is to be regarded as the sole standard of Duty.

These constitute the leading features of the principal theories, which have been advanced both in

ancient and modern times in illustration of the grounds and obligations of Duty. As an appendage of some of these hypotheses, it has been frequently investigated and discussed whether virtue be in itself immutable and eternal, a relation absolutely indestructible and inseparable from the nature of things, or whether it be a positive and discretionary appointment resulting from the mere Will of the Author of nature, and capable of being reversed and modified by his injunctions\*. In these inquiries it does not appear to be sufficiently kept in view that Duty or Virtue is in itself no positive, absolute being, but a mere quality or relation belonging to a state of things actually existing. It supposes, therefore, in its very idea some being, in whom it may be considered as inhering, and a certain order of circumstances, before it can be called forth into practical exhibition. Like mathematical and other axioms it can be considered as eternal only on supposition of the conditions which it necessarily implies. Assuming these conditions, and extending our views to possible as well as actual existences, its nature and obligations are doubtless eternally and unalterably

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\* According to Warburton, whose views would in some measure seem to unite the various theories of his predecessors, morality is founded on three combined principles: the *moral sense*, the *natural fitness* of things, and the *Will of God*. Of these it is the last only which can constitute moral obligation, but [it is limited in its power to bind to obedience by the nature of the command and the mutual relations and circumstances of the parties concerned. "It is not simply *Will*, but *Will so and so circumstanced*," and though, according to his notion, Will could bind, though all consideration of consequence were discarded, yet he acknowledges that "Will could not bind to unhappiness."—*Divine Leg.*, book i. sect. 4.



fixed. That benevolence, for example, is in itself amiable, and entitled to gratitude and affection, wherever there are beings capable of exercising it towards appropriate objects—that malevolence, on the contrary, is odious and detestable—that a beneficent Creator has a just claim upon the homage and obedience of his dependent creatures, wherever these relations may exist—these are moral axioms or elements of virtue as absolute and unchangeable in themselves, antecedently to all positive injunction, as any of the surest dictates of reason, or of the first principles of geometrical science. The former class of truths commend themselves as strongly and irresistibly to our moral susceptibilities, as the latter to our rational convictions. And they may be considered as constituting the first germ or nucleus of that aggregation of natural dictates and positive injunctions, which in their collective character form the materials of the Moral Law—that Law, which, so far as it is known, is the last authoritative standard of Duty to every rational and accountable being. In this connection I do not consider the Moral Law simply as the Law of Nature, nor exclusively as an epitome of the preceptive disclosures of divine revelation, but as the great standard of virtue and excellence, so far as it can be appreciated by our faculties throughout the whole universe. This standard does not vary with the changing conditions of any particular department of the divine government, with the oscillations of the manners of society, and the fluctuations of human character. In its fundamental principle it remains immutably the same amidst all

the changes and evolutions which may take place among those who may come within the range of its requirements—amidst all the new forms of intellectual being, which in the progress of time the creative will of Deity may call forth into existence, and place beneath its sway. The history of the universe, from the birth of created nature until now, has been a history of changes and vicissitudes. Analogy would suggest that the dominions of Jehovah have still been extending their range—that worlds have risen upon worlds, and that the boundless amplitude of space has been continually replenishing with new abodes of happiness—with fresh subjects of moral government as the most effectual means of renewing and perpetuating that happiness. All the discoveries of science—all the brief intimations of divine revelation interpreted by the spontaneous and concurrent dictates of our own minds seem to argue a vast scale of rational and intelligent beings deriving life and happiness from the same great source—moving at various distances around the same centre, and therefore of necessity required to obey the same unvarying rule of subordination and dependence. This law of subjection, of purity, and of happiness, is the great bond of harmony throughout the universe. In its nature and authority it is as extensive as creation, and as lasting as eternity. In its essential characteristics as an expression of all that is holy, wise, and good; of all that is just, virtuous, and beneficent; it is as unchangeable as the Being from whom it flowed.

And as the Moral Law constituting the ultimate and authoritative standard of Duty, is immutable in its principle, it follows that it is universal in its bearing and application. It embraces within its comprehensive range the universality of those beings, whatever may be the diversity of their capacity and condition, which are capable of virtue and happiness. It ascends the whole climax—rising to the loftiest point, and descending to the lowest grade of accountable agency. It is of equal force in each of what we have been accustomed to consider as the three great departments of the creation,—in the world of holiness and happiness above—in the world of discipline and probation in which we have been destined to spend this introductory period of our existence, and in the world of penal retribution below. The difference is solely in the result and application of its provisions, as modified by the character of the beings, upon whom its sanctions are brought to bear. The principle and spirit of its enactments are the same. It is the law of angels, vastly superior to all that we can now conceive as their circumstances and endowments may be, and little as we know of the graduated economies, under which their respective orders may live, inasmuch as it holds out to them a standard of duty blazing in legible characters over the throne of their Sovereign, upon the observance of which their happiness as much depends as that of the lowest inhabitant of earth. It has been the law of human nature, amidst all the changes of its character and condition, throughout every period in the history of

the world, and amidst every successive dispensation under which its moral government has been administered, and it will form the last rule of judgment, by which our destiny throughout eternity will be determined. It was imposed upon us at the very dawn of our existence. It has been inviolably binding upon obedience amidst all the subsequent revolutions, which have befallen us, and the benevolent interpositions made in our behalf. All the misery which has been entailed upon us, or is incurred by our own misconduct, is the aggregate result of its infractions. It is the law exhibited in awful execution among the inmates of the world of penal woe, inasmuch as the wretchedness which they are doomed to endure, is the ratification of its inviolable sanctions. These views of the Moral Law as the Standard of Duty seem necessarily to flow from the very nature and character of its Author. When we speak of the Moral law as having God for its Author, we employ the term as an abstract expression of that aggregate of principles, which forms, as it were, the established constitution of that universe of which He is the Sovereign. In the original institution of such an order of government, we may legitimately assume that He was influenced by the best reasons. The whole system was based upon benevolence the most enlightened, disinterested, and expansive. In order that this principle might be developed, however, upon the largest possible scale in the diffusion of happiness in its purest and most exalted forms, it was obviously necessary that various other principles should be associated and combined. It is the result of this blended

exercise of infinite power and wisdom and benevolence, embodied into the Will of the supreme Governor, which constitutes the Moral Law. Its permanency and immutability are secured in the very attributes, which were employed in its formation. By the universality of his knowledge, Jehovah was free from all possible mistake in fixing the first great principles of his government. His eye penetrated not only all that was actual, but all that was possible in the nature of things. It perceived every minute as well as every magnificent evolution, which the stupendous forces impressed upon the machinery of matter were about to produce. It anticipated the still darker and more intricate workings of the rational will. It outstripped the career of time, spread its survey over the widest expanse of space, and brought the remotest outlines of creation within the range of its concentrated glance. The benignity of his character afforded an equal security for everything that was excellent and most conducive to the happiness of his creatures in the first conception of his great rules of procedure towards them, while his power keeping pace with every other attribute of his nature rendered certain the accomplishment of every wise and beneficent design. It was impossible, therefore, that any new and unexpected event in any department of the universe should surprise him into a necessity of changing the first principles of his administration. There is this great difference to be considered between the Moral Law as the standard of universal Duty, and the positive enactments of man—that the former preceded the state of things, which

it was intended to regulate, just as the principles which are to govern a system of machinery are clearly perceived and appreciated by the inventor, before that system is actually constructed. The engine is therefore adapted to pre-existing forms and laws of mechanical action, and not the reverse; whereas the latter,—the injunctions of human appointment, are these contrivances adjusted to a condition of things actually existing, and consequently liable to all the changes, which the variations and the imperfect knowledge of that condition may require. They are but local applications intended to repress the outbreakings of a disorder, the seat of which is beyond their cognizance and control. They are comparatively but shifts of a political empiric, who is liable to be baffled in every attempt to attain the great object of legislation, and is therefore obliged to vary his measures at every new turn of events. At the best his efforts are but experiments, which are correct only in proportion to his knowledge of a state of things previously existing, and successful only as far as they accord with the conservative and divinely established principles of social happiness. The case of the Moral Law, in its various modes of application, is totally the reverse. Here the principle is perfect, and therefore immutable. The whole frame of the material and intellectual universe was constituted in accordance with its character, and in subordination to its dictates. It is therefore immutable, universal, and eternal.

Such is the Law, which we conceive to be the last authoritative standard of Human Duty. Everything



short of this, as the ultimate ground of moral obligation, is baseless, fluctuating, and uncertain. This is the voice of the Eternal issued forth at the first dawn of the creation—a voice whose accents were blended with the melody of the morning stars, and touched a chord of responsive and undying harmony throughout every region of the intellectual universe. Of this primary annunciation of the Sovereign Will there is left a record on every page of nature,—a memorial upon every pillar of creation—an echo in every rational ear, and an inscription upon the tables of every sentient heart. They are these fainter vestiges,—they are these remembered tones of celestial music still floating through the turbid atmosphere of this lower world, which so many have mistaken for the original, authoritative, and direct communications of Jehovah's will, and consequently, instead of being regarded as accordant intimations, they have been erected into the sole standards of duty. It has been forgotten that such monitions, however valuable, when explained and illustrated by a principle of higher and more lucid interpretation, are in themselves utterly insufficient. The intimations of nature and providence may be neglected or misunderstood; the sympathies of the heart may be perverted and be turned aside from their natural channel: the standard of Utility may be lowered down to the level of a grovelling and selfish calculation—the voice of conscience may be drowned amidst the storms of un-governed passion; and the laws of the civil magistrate may be the enactments of impiety, venality, and oppression, and thus the spirit, which is provided

with no other resource, may, like the Dove sent out of the Ark, be found to wander amidst the tempestuous elements of an overwhelming deluge, without being able to discover any firm footing, upon which its sense of duty may venture with confidence to repose. The history of the world, so far as it has been destitute of the light of divine revelation, is to a great extent a melancholy record of theoretic errors, or of practical deviations from the rule of universal right. But wherever this rule has been fully and distinctly made known, it must, undoubtedly, be regarded as that, which is to define and limit our ideas of moral excellence—as the grand directory of conduct—as the last authoritative criterion of all that is pure and just and good. This it is, therefore, which at once directs us in the way of our duty, and binds us by the most imperative obligations to its performance. We shall now, therefore, proceed more distinctly to inquire into the source, in which the Moral Law may be considered as having originated.

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### SECTION III.

#### THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF THE MORAL LAW AS BINDING UPON THE CONSCIENCE.

THE moral law, or, as it has been frequently termed, the law of nature, so far as it relates to the conduct of rational beings, may be considered in its primary application as the law of *motives*. In contradistinction to those rules of action which control the operations of physical substances, it has immediately to do

only with that choice, purpose, or design of the mind, which Aristotle has properly denominated *προαιρεσις*\*. In its legitimate acceptance as a standard of duty, and as involving considerations of merit and demerit, it applies solely to the views and intentions of the rational understanding and will, as lying at the foundation of all the decisions of the conscience. The whole of the material universe is subject to laws or established modes of action adapted to the peculiar nature, character, and design of its several departments. Nor does it appear that there has been a single deviation from these habits originally impressed upon its various elements, except when they have been intentionally suspended and overruled by a higher power, from the creation until the present moment. The laws of chemistry and mechanics—the phenomena of heat, electricity and magnetism, so far as they have been accurately investigated and ascertained by adequate induction, have been found to be invariably uniform. Thus nature in all her material modifications, when questioned in reference to the same powers and elements, has universally returned the same replies.

Analogy would have led us to expect that the same uniformity should prevail in the higher and more important department of the works of the Creator; in other words, that the Moral Law should be as fixed and invariable in its bearing towards its proper subjects as that which regulates the machinery and controls the combinations and reactions of that mass

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\* Προαιρεσις οικειοτατον ειναι δοκει τη αρετη, και μαλλον τα ηθη κρινειν των πραξεων.—ARISTOT. *Eth.* lib. 3, c. 2.

of corpuscular substances which forms the material world. In the method of government by means of these laws, however, the analogy entirely ceases. The physical and inanimate system is a mere series of motions—a change of position, resulting from innate forces among the constituent atoms of a mass. The moral regimen, on the contrary, is conducted upon totally other principles. In this the motions of the body, the actions and effects resulting from those motions are taken into the account and brought under cognizance only as they are supposed to spring from sentiments and emotions of a voluntary and designing mind. And they are estimated with a reference more or less obvious and direct to the evil or the good, which they are calculated to produce among an order of beings susceptible of the most intense sensations of suffering or enjoyment. This circumstance alone places the operations of the human will as subject to the restrictions of the moral law upon a footing utterly dissimilar from the mechanical processes of causation prevailing in the material system; and therefore the attempt to explain the former by analogies derived from the latter beyond that of mere metaphorical illustration, is wholly devoid of force. The law which we are now investigating, exclusively applies to rational and intellectual beings, and the science, which undertakes to analyze its first principles may be suitably denominated the *Doctrine of Motives*. In its corollaries and practical results, however, it embraces the whole range of the character and conduct of rational existences of every rank and order throughout the universe. Whatever has a

designed relation to the happiness or suffering of beings capable of those emotions—whatever in thought, feeling, or conduct, is susceptible of admeasurement by the established rule of duty, must be considered as falling under the cognizance of that great standard of obligation, of which we are now endeavouring to trace the nature and origin. Universal and immutable, however, as is the principle, in which it is founded, in the details and peculiarities of its requirements, it varies according to the character and circumstances of the beings to whom it applies.

Its nature we cannot, perhaps, more briefly and accurately define than by representing it as that which binds every being endued with the powers of thought and reflection, *in subordination to the glory of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, to design the welfare, happiness, and security of all other beings in anywise connected with him by the equitable discharge* of all his relative obligations towards them. It is obvious, indeed, that, while the principle of the Moral Law is universally the same as tending to the safety and well-being of those, who are capable of enjoyment, and to the infliction of condign suffering upon those who have violated its just obligations, it assumes a diversity of aspects corresponding to the character and relations of those whose conduct is to be governed by its dictates. This is essential to its propriety and efficiency as the rule of adjudication among the several ranks and orders of being—as the criterion of moral worth throughout the whole extent of the vast scale of intellectual nature. An instrument thus universal in its design and application

must of necessity have taken its rise in a mind capable of comprehending all the endless multiplicity of interests on which it was to bear, and in one simple sentiment, which contained, as it were, in embryo, the whole of that boundless range of ramification and expansion, of which it has proved susceptible. By this we are led to trace the origin of the Moral Law to the *essential nature and character of the great First Cause of all things*. This sublime standard of virtue and excellence had existed, as a habit of being, though not in the specific form of a law, in the mind of Deity, from eternity. It had dwelt in the breast of Jehovah, presenting, as in a mirror, the reflected light and beauty of his own spotless excellency, and exhibiting to his introspecting eye a model of every imaginable perfection, while yet in the absence of every other object of contemplation, and in the solitude of his own blissful existence, He filled that indefinable orb of duration and space, which preceded the birth of creation.

In the language of Solomon, applied to the personification of infinite wisdom, "The Lord possessed it in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old. It was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths it was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Then it was by Him as one brought up with Him, and it was daily his delight, rejoicing always before Him."

When we employ such language in illustration of the Moral Law as it originally existed in the character of the Deity, we mean no abstract code of pre-



scribed regulations, to which Jehovah was bound by external obligation to conform his conduct. The term Law, as applied to Him, is nothing more than an expression of the essential and unalterable principles and habits of his being. He was subject to no outward authority, to which He was bound in duty or interest to yield the homage of submission, and to pay the tribute of obedience. There was no higher tribunal, to which He could regard himself as amenable. There was nothing out of the range of his own nature, which He could recognize as a directing or controlling power in the original exercises of his will, and in the progressive fulfilment of his purposes. He stood pre-eminent and supreme in the discharge of every creative and legislative function. Everything in the natural and moral world, according to the original constitution of things, was evolved as a direct emanation out of the sovereign exercise of his own essential attributes. Thus He was a Law unto himself—responsible only to the judgment, which He passed upon his own conduct. But in the formation of all his plans and in the execution of all his purposes, though He was free by his inviolable prerogative as the first and greatest of beings from all authoritative obligation or controlling influence, yet there was in Him an original quality of nature and character as fixed and invariable as his very existence, which afforded a security that He should design or accomplish nothing but what was pure and just and good. That law, therefore, which had virtually and essentially existed in his own nature from all eternity, He made the Rule of his

conduct in the creation and his instrument of government in the subsequent administration of the world; and they are only modified applications of this sublime emanation of everlasting wisdom and goodness—of justice, and power, and love, which pervade the whole mass, and bind together in relative dependency and obligation the whole frame of society.

It is this which secures the uniformity and benignity of the supreme rules of government as administered by the universal Sovereign. It is this which unites the Creator in love and rectitude to his creatures, and reunites the creatures in duty and obedience to the Creator. This is the federative bond of the universe, binding together and securing by the strict execution of its provisions in one great interest of glory and happiness, God, angels, and men. It is the rule of judgment in the Supreme Court above, dispensing his due awards unto every one upon principles of justice combined with love. It is that which gives all their force and validity to the decisions and enactments of the subordinate and representative courts here below. It is that which obliges man, first in homage and service to his God, and then in duty and benevolence to his fellow, thus forming at once the foundation of true religion, and the authoritative rule, the connecting link of all the relative rights, offices, and interests of social life.

Such we conceive to be, in brief, the nature and origin of the Moral Law, that which is at once the authoritative standard of duty, and will be the rule of final adjudication and retribution to every accountable agent. It is primarily the Law of Motives as

adapted to beings possessed of powers of reflection and voluntary action, and as taking cognizance through the exercise of conscience, of the prevailing principles and affections of the mind, and by a necessary extension of its jurisdiction it is, secondarily, the law of practical conduct as suggested, regulated, and controlled by those internal impulses. In endeavouring to discover its origin we can only trace it to the essential nature of Him, who is the fountain of all existence. In his character it dwelt from all eternity as a sanctuary consecrated by its presence and irradiated by its effulgent beams. By his will and authority it was embodied into a reflecting mirror of his excellency, and placed aloft upon the highest pinnacle of the universe, displaying before the countless myriads of its intelligent occupants, the standard of their Duty—the contrasted guilt and enormity of disobedience, and a model of sinless perfection.

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#### SECTION IV.

THE MEANS BY WHICH THE MORAL LAW, OR THE LAW OF CONSCIENCE, HAS BEEN MADE KNOWN UNTO MAN.

IF that order of principles then, which we denominate the Moral Law, be such in their origin, obligation, and extent: if in their collective character they constitute the instrument by which Jehovah governs the world, and with an undeviating reference to which, He dispenses happiness and misery to beings, who fall under their legitimate control, it is not less

important than it is interesting to ascertain by what means of communication such a rule of judgment has been made known unto man. It is indispensable to the equitable administration of a law that the knowledge of it, so far as it is intended to be enforced, should be brought within the reach of its subjects. However correct it may be in its principles—however necessary in its enactments—however right and unimpeachable in its sanctions, no one can justly become entitled to its rewards, or exposed to its penal visitations, who was unavoidably debarred the opportunity of making himself acquainted with its provisions and demands. Neglect and voluntary ignorance, or an inaptitude to appreciate its requisitions, superinduced by a wilful violation of duty, can indeed plead no exemption from the penalty due to transgression; for in such a case guilt would always find a secure refuge in the darkness, to which it had chosen to retire. It would only be necessary resolutely to close the eyes against the light, and to turn a deaf ear to the calls of truth and duty, to rush into crime with impunity, and to divest sin of all its enormity. All that is requisite to give force to a law and to justify the execution of its retributive sanctions, is that the means of ascertaining its real character and bearings should be strictly proportioned to the measure, in which it is intended to be carried into effect. As, therefore, the Moral Law was obviously designed by its wise and beneficent Author to regulate the present conduct, and to determine the future destiny of his rational creatures, it would be utterly at variance with all our notions

of his character to suppose that he should at any time have left them in total ignorance of it. The modes, indeed, may have been various—the degrees of clearness and accuracy may have been different. These are points, which Infinite Wisdom was best qualified to determine, and the estimate of unerring justice will not fail to take into the final account. But that moral agents of every order are supplied with means and facilities of discovering the law of their duty, proportioned to the extent of their responsibility and to the magnitude of the interests involved, enters into our notion of the first principles of all equitable government: and hence we may freely assume that, in reference to his demands upon the service and obedience of his creatures, Jehovah has not left himself without a witness to bear testimony to the nature and justness of his claims.

In our investigation of the origin of the Moral Law, we traced it to the very essence of the character of Jehovah as a just and beneficent and holy Being. On the creation of the material and intellectual universe, these attributes of his nature were embodied into a specific and authoritative expression of his Will. Hence that which before existed as an essential quality of character, now began to be recognized as a law—adapted to the government of beings endowed with appropriate faculties and susceptibilities of impression—in other words, with the attribute of conscience. As the Moral Law thus virtually pre-existed in the character of the great first cause; it was to be expected that he should impart something of that impression to all the effects, which issued

from his creative energy. In accordance with this view of things, the first intimation of Jehovah's will—the first draught as it were of the Moral Law, is to be found in the very constitution and frame of Nature as originally established by his power and wisdom, and as subsequently preserved and regulated by his over-ruling Providence. To those, who have duly considered the subject, it will appear sufficiently evident, that the whole system of Nature bears a Moral aspect. It was the absurd notion of some of the ancient sects of philosophy, that matter has in itself an inherent malignity, and that the world, which is composed of it, owes its existence to the power of evil. The fact is, on the contrary, that the whole system of the universe is pervaded by what we may call a principle of Morality analogous to that of electricity, heat, or attraction, in the natural world. Throughout its whole extent it seems to be instinct with this spirit of life, and purity, and love. While we contemplate the stupendous fabric of the material universe, it is impossible not to perceive that its *Design* was conceived in perfect accordance with the law of eternal rectitude and benevolence. To adopt the language of scenic representation, whatever may be the obscurity and apparent incongruity of some of its subordinate departments, the general *effect*, which the view of it is calculated to produce upon the mind, is that of a deep impression of its moral character and tendency. To the eye of enlightened reason it presents the appearance of a vast temple of virtue based upon the everlasting pillars of justice, and bearing inscribed



upon every portal appropriate maxims of duty unto all, who are introduced within its precincts.

The means by which the Will of God, as expressed in the Moral Law, is made known in the system of nature, is in the first place the striking exhibition which it affords of his moral perfections. It is true indeed that they are the natural attributes of Jehovah, so denominated, in contradistinction to the former—his moral perfections, which stand forth with most immediate and observable prominence upon the surface of the material universe, and even these, when surveyed in their just bearing, and in their due relation to the class, which has been usually designated as moral, will be found strongly confirmatory of the same general impression. The most remarkable characteristic of the Author of nature, perhaps, with which the mind is struck, while it contemplates the frame of the universe, is the vast power which it displays. With this is immediately associated the sublime and boundless skill with which this stupendous machinery is regulated. These attributes in themselves involve no moral excellency. They might have been exerted in the creation and government of a system, which would be productive of nothing but misery and wretchedness. Power might have been employed only to tyrannize and oppress, and skill to devise the means of suffering and torture. We know of no necessity except the inherent and essential tendency of his own gracious nature, which could prevent a Being possessed of these awful qualities to the extent, to which it is

obvious that he does possess them, from putting them forth in the incessant multiplication of creatures endued with the most exquisite sensibilities, in order to delight Himself with the sight of their agonies, and to listen to the music of their cries. We know no reason in the absence of other attributes, why the universe should not be at once turned into an aceldama, and the fair volume of creation should not be wrapped up into one dark scroll, inscribed with mourning, lamentation, and woe. But when, instead of these direful hypothetical possibilities, we find that the power and wisdom of Deity have been exerted in the production of a scheme of things, which bears the most obvious impress of the benignity of his character, and appears to have been called into existence for the express purpose of communicating the largest amount of happiness compatible with moral government unto beings, whom He has endued with a capacity of enjoying it; when we perceive how admirably the whole system of the universe is balanced and adjusted—how its contending forces are found to harmonize in the welfare and security of man—how nicely the whole of the mighty apparatus of heaven and earth is adapted to his condition, and made to contribute to the good of him, and, as the voice of reason and analogy unequivocally pronounces, of other orders of sentient beings: amid such views of things it is impossible not to recognize in the very machinery of nature a principle of moral action as positive, as absolute, and as uniform in its tendencies, however occasionally counteracted by human depravity and weakness, as the most palpable and

invariable law of matter. Thus regarded, the Sun becomes a bright revelation of its Maker's will and character; and every star, which bestuds the firmament, becomes a torch to light us into a knowledge of our duty. It is to these resplendent manifestations of Jehovah's attributes as the measures of man's obligations that the apostle triumphantly appeals, as rendering impiety and disobedience inexcusable. The more, therefore, we know of the laws of nature, the more shall we discover of the will of God, and of our own corresponding duty, and hence the declaration of Newton will be realized—that as the boundaries of natural philosophy are extended, the limits of moral philosophy will experience a proportionate enlargement. But the spirit of the Moral Law appears to be still more distinctly embodied in the system of nature, in that, according to the present constitution and course of things happiness is invariably found in a degree more or less to attend on one line of conduct, and misery in some form or other on the reverse. The grand characteristic of a moral government is here distinctly exhibited. The voice of nature clearly distinguishes between right and wrong, and proclaims in audible language the difference which will be finally made between them. It is true indeed that the present system of nature, as it is administered towards the various orders of human character, does not afford a full and accurate development of the principles of the divine government. It doubtless presents much of obscurity and intricacy to the eye, which has not been illumined by a brighter manifestation. The dispensations of the Supreme Ruler in the present

state are for the most part general and indiscriminate. There is enough in the constitution of nature however, to give a decisive indication of the Will of its Author as it relates to the leading features of human conduct. There is enough to show the tendency of the system as expressive of his appointment and design. There is enough in the opposite effects, which in the existing order of things virtue and vice are respectively calculated, and seldom fail to produce, to stamp the former as his delight, and the latter as his abhorrence. The great principles of individual security and social happiness are interwoven with the whole tissue of providential and physical arrangements. There is a meaning in the silent countenance of nature, which tells the most ignorant and unreflecting that He who made it is One who loves purity and benevolence, rectitude and truth, and marks with his unequivocal displeasure cruelty and oppression, intemperance, malignity and fraud. Amidst all the irregularity and confusion, which the great original catastrophe, that befel our species, has introduced into the world, there is still discoverable a moral basis, which nothing can utterly destroy—resting beneath the superincumbent layers of human passions and opinions, like the primitive granite, over which the secondary formation may have been deposited, or the basaltic torrent may have rushed.

Thus it is that in the original constitution of the frame of nature, and in the general course of providential government, there is a striking view afforded of the essential character of Jehovah as the origin and archetype of the Moral Law. The more deeply

we are enabled to penetrate into the arcana of nature—the more accurately and comprehensively we survey its relative bearings and dependencies, by so much the more clearly and unequivocally shall we find it to be stamped with the impress of its Maker's attributes. It was not without reason, therefore, that Newton remarked, as above noticed, that as the bounds of natural science were extended, the range of Moral Philosophy would be proportionably expanded and enlarged. As the veil is gradually removed—as the curtains are drawn aside by the hand of successful investigation, and open a wider scene of contemplation to the eye of the reflecting observer, he will doubtless find greater reason to admire, not only the wisdom and power displayed to his view in every variety of minute and splendid illustration, but also the same great rule of right—the same principle of sublime and superlative excellence pervading the whole economy of the universe: and the law of duty will thus be found as invariable in its obligation—as deeply laid in its foundation, and as broad and diffusive in its relation to its proper subjects as the simplest and most comprehensive form of material and physical action. This, therefore, may be regarded as the first, though not the clearest method, in which the Moral Law has been evolved, inasmuch as its leading principles were embodied in the original formation of the system of the universe, and are conspicuously held forth to the view in the arrangements of an all-regulating and all-sustaining providence.

In order, however, that this physical and providential revelation of the Divine Will might be of

any avail in aiding man to attain unto a knowledge and sense of his duty, it was necessary that his own mind should be endued with a *susceptibility of accor-dant impression*, appropriately denominated conscience. And this is the next means by which we may consider the Moral Law as made known unto man. Between the soul of man and the external universe there is obviously a striking relation. There is a remarkable mutual adaptation between the parts of the one, and the faculties of the other. To some, indeed, the connexion has appeared so close that the external world of matter and motion was deemed to have no existence, except as it was identified with the various notions and impressions of the internal world of thought and affection. By Leibnitz the analogy was deemed so remarkable, as to induce him to have recourse to the notion of a pre-established Harmony between the two great departments of nature—implying that, without any real communication with each other, they are respectively so constituted as that the state of external things should be at all times exactly such as the mind represents them, although its ideas are developed entirely from its own nature.

Without, however, adopting either of these hypotheses, it is abundantly evident that the powers of intellect, and the organs of perception, as well as the capabilities of moral impression in man are wonderfully and designedly adapted to a condition of things, which affords occasion for their exercise. There is doubtless as great a suitableness in the capabilities of the mind to receive the moral intimations intended



to be conveyed in the system of nature, as there is in the organ of vision to be impressed by the undulations of the luminiferous ether.

Without attempting to revive the theory of innate practical principles, which Locke was at so much pains to explode, we must still maintain that the native character of the human mind, as it relates to moral instincts, is very inadequately and inaccurately represented by the analogy of the *rasa tabula*—an utter blank as to any original impressions. It is readily conceded indeed that the mind of man is not a species of register, the leaves of which are inscribed as with the pen of inspiration, and bear on record the edicts of the Eternal, previously to, and independently of, the numberless train of educational influences, to which in every condition of society it must be subject. At such a period it is obvious that it is destitute of all the materials which enter into the constitution of every definite idea of moral right and legal obligation. Where there is no notion of those relations and connections, which Duty universally involves, it is evident that there can be no conception, much less a deep-felt impression of what is just and right. The only sense therefore, in which, consistently with reason and experience, moral principles or a recognition of the universal Law of Conduct can be said to be instinctive and innate, is that there is in the very constitution of our intellectual and moral nature an aptitude—a tendency—a pre-disposition for the development of those judgments under the influences of the peculiar circumstances, in which we have been placed. The mind, according to this view of it, may

be regarded as a sheet of paper—not indeed indifferent to any characters that may be drawn upon it, and equally calculated for the reception of what is true or false, right or wrong, but bearing in indelible inscription the Law of Duty, invisible, however, to the perceptive faculty until it be drawn forth into palpable exhibition by the application of appropriate influence. As the element of heat, by its effect upon the chemical fluid, in which the characters had been traced, brings out into distinct and legible forms what before had lain concealed on the colourless uniformity of a blank, so the commingling glow of expanding faculties, actuated and controlled by social and circumstantial influences, calls out and gradually embodies into unavoidable recognition those moral intimations and impressions, which, however they may be occasionally perverted and misconstrued, are felt to be as true as nature itself, and as firm as the foundations of the universe. They may be distorted indeed from their original bearing—they may be corroded by an ungenial atmosphere—they may be overwhelmed beneath the thick layers of surrounding depravity and corruption—they may be deluged by the overflowing tide of headlong and ungovernable passions; but amidst all this disorder of functions and dislocations of parts, their elements will be found, if we may so speak, among the lower strata of the mental system, like a monumental pillar buried, in some destructive convulsion of nature, beneath a mass of earth and rubbish, and requiring only to be cleared and raised to light in order to exhibit the same unalterable inscription.

It is this ready perception and irresistible conviction of what is really and essentially right, which in holy writ is described as "the Law written on the heart,"—a law, which is said by the Apostle to accuse or excuse, in reference to the more general and important part of their character, those who are destitute of any other rule of conduct. It is regarded by some as specifically the Light, which lighteth every one, which cometh into the world, inasmuch as it exhibits the great broad lines of duty with sufficient clearness for general practical purposes unto every man who is willing to be guided by its beams. It is an internal capability of moral perception, independently of all supernatural communication, which, on account of its analogy to the external inlets of ideas may be justly called a moral sense. It is that, which, in the absence of all direct and positive instruction, enables us to discriminate the eternal and unalterable difference between right and wrong, and pronounces its verdict upon any alleged act of conduct with a rapidity which outstrips the application of any positive standard of duty; and will be found wrong in its decisions only where it has been inadequately developed or perverted by custom or evil passion. This is the voice from within, which responds to the many voices from without, forming by their combined and mingled melody the moral Harmony of the universe.

In bestowing on man such a constitution of nature—in so framing and balancing his susceptibilities as to secure their attestation to the great fundamental principles of moral government, the Author of his being may unquestionably be con-

sidered as virtually conveying to him a knowledge of his Law. Without this capability of appreciating the purity and justice of that Law, all other means of attaining unto a knowledge of it, or of enforcing the practical observance of it, would have been utterly useless and unavailing. It is this which renders man a fit subject of moral discipline, for that system can take salutary effect only in proportion to the fulness and spontaneity of that homage, which the heart yields at every step to its requisitions. So far, therefore, as man is a moral being, a being endowed with the faculty of conscience, he embodies in his own character a living representation of that Law, which has its origin in the eternal Mind.

But although the Moral Law be embodied, as has been already shown, in the whole system of nature, and is exemplified before the eyes of the intelligent universe in the constant administration of the divine government, and although, as has been further stated, its leading characteristics and requirements are interwoven with the first principles of the human constitution, yet the peculiar circumstances of our nature rendered a more direct and authoritative communication essential to a complete and adequate knowledge of its demands. There is enough, indeed, in the phenomena of the Creation as they unfold themselves to the view under the control of a superintending Providence, combined with the unequivocal intimations of his own conscience to inform the judgment of man in the great outlines of practical duty. There is a sufficient measure of light elicited from the mutual action of his own faculties and the

magnificent scenery of the world around him, to render him inexcusable in the violation of the first principles of moral obligation. But for all the interesting and important details of his more specific relations towards the author of his being and the duties which those relations involve—for a definite view of the high sanctions with which the requisitions of the Law are enforced—for a knowledge of the peculiar stipulations and provisions which the great ruler of the universe hath made for his preservation and direction—for these several purposes the book of nature is far too general and comprehensive, too enigmatical and obscure. And upon these points, which are so closely connected with his destiny, the exercises of his own reason directed by the instinctive susceptibilities of his character are incapable of throwing any further light. Upon numberless questions, which bear with the most commanding influence upon the moral regimen of his nature, the great volume of the universe, so far as it can be comprehended by his unaided powers, is a sealed book—the page of his own reason is a blank. While he is confined to the exclusive information conveyed by these instruments of knowledge, he is in the condition of one, who is a stranger in a country governed by peculiar statutory enactments, superinduced upon the fundamental laws of human conduct as the necessary result of the character and circumstances of its inhabitants. Such an one might not be likely to err upon the few great points, which are considered as constituting the law of nations. He might be fully aware of the general duty of sub-

jection, which he owed to the governing powers. He might be in no danger of mistaking the rules of justice and benevolence as binding upon every human being. But of the specific arrangements, which were then obligatory as having arisen from the prevailing habits and exigencies of the community, he might labour under utter ignorance, while these arrangements were in reality but modifications and results of the eternal law of duty written on his own heart.

It was to supply this great deficiency of the book of nature and of the table of conscience—it was to explain what was symbolical and obscure—to confirm what was doubtful and uncertain, and to correct what was erroneously conceived in both, that the *Plan of a direct revelation was adopted*. It was not to contradict and set at nought the intimations of both, or to supersede the use of either as the means, within due limitations, of discovering the rule of duty, but to afford a more copious and accurate detail of information upon points of the highest moment than they were able to impart. This, therefore, is the next—the most ample and satisfactory means, by which the Moral Law, in the general and extensive sense of the expression, has been made known unto man. And although the testimony of this last witness be incomparably more definite and express than that of either of the former, yet it will be found in no degree at variance with their genuine information, wherever it has been correctly appreciated and understood.

The method of communicating and receiving knowledge by Revelation is twofold. It is either by



immediate personal inspiration or by tradition, or in other words, by a written record of what was revealed unto him, by whom it was thus embodied. The knowledge which is imparted unto us in the Scriptures, is evidently conveyed by the latter method. It was originally received by the former. The evidence of its truth, if duly authenticated, is equally decisive in both cases. The mode, in which supernatural knowledge has been delivered, has likewise greatly differed in different instances. In many cases mentioned in the Old Testament, and probably in that of our first parents in the time of innocence, Jehovah was pleased to impart the intended knowledge by vocal communication in outward audible language. During the continuance of the paradisiacal and patriarchal dispensations, Jehovah was pleased to hold intercourse with his servants as a man would speak unto his friend. He made known unto them his will in accents, which fell upon their organs of sensitive perception. The more frequent method at subsequent times, however, appears to have been that of a strong impression made upon the mind by the resistless influence of the divine Spirit—carrying direct conviction to the understanding, overpowering the imagination with a burden of sublime or moral imagery, and tracing upon the tables of the memory the records of infallible truth. In one memorable instance, indeed, God was pleased to inscribe as with his own hand, a brief summary of his will, to be preserved as a permanent document, which might be known and read of all men.

The most succinct, explicit, and comprehensive digest of the Moral Law, illumined and interpreted by the subsequent discoveries of the Gospel, ever communicated from Heaven to Earth, is doubtless that, which was delivered unto Moses upon Mount Sinai, arranged under ten specific injunctions, and written upon two tables of stone. Previously to this important era there had been no positive and palpable record bearing the immediate stamp and authority of the Lawgiver Himself to instruct men in the knowledge of their duty. They had been hitherto left to those imperfect notions, which they were able to derive from the sources already mentioned, aided, indeed, by the floating remains of traditionary revelation, and by the occasional irradiations, which were darted down from on high to illumine the spirits of the faithful, but without any authentic expression of moral obligation embodied into the form of a fixed standard—an appeal to which would rectify misapprehension, and set conjecture at rest. This was the first written proclamation of the great Sovereign of the Universe, calling his subjects to their allegiance, and directing them in the path of their duty. This brief instrument contains, under ten distinct heads, all the fundamental principles of the divine government. This may be regarded as a series of postulates, by a due regard to which the various problems and corollaries of Moral Science may be solved. In this the great practical truths, which lay scattered over the face of nature, or buried in the unexplored depths of the human mind beneath a confused and overwhelming mass of carnal prejudices and passions,

were brought out into clear and prominent exhibition, and concentrated into a few intense points of express and authoritative requisition. Although these points assume a positive, and in some respects an arbitrary aspect, yet on a closer survey of them in relation to the real condition of humanity, they will all be found based upon a moral reason of the most important and influential character. They are, in fact, nothing else than the theory of that constitution, which Jehovah hath established, reduced under a few pregnant, practical principles. As farther generalized and simplified by our blessed Saviour, they may be comprehended under the significant axiom, that it is the duty of man supremely to love the Lord his God and his neighbour as himself. This extensive formula may be regarded as virtually containing within itself all the demands of the Moral Law, just as D'Alembert remarked, that the whole mass of mathematical science is nothing more than modifications and results of the simple equation  $a = b$ .

The book of inspiration, as conveying the knowledge of the Moral Law, indeed, we consider as an explicit and authoritative declaration of duties, which were enjoined *in the book of Nature*, but in language too enigmatical and indefinite to admit of their being clearly comprehended. It is, within certain limits, like a luminous treatise on natural philosophy, which does not invent or call into existence the facts, which it records and illustrates, but only exhibits in a small compass the result of a long and intricate investigation, and thus brings to the dis-

inct view of the mind what otherwise must have escaped its observation, or surpassed its conception. It is from the book of Revelation, therefore, and from that alone, that a complete and adequate knowledge of the Moral Law, in the present state of our nature, is to be obtained. That volume, indeed, will be found infinitely to surpass, in fulness of information and accuracy of detail, any other source of knowledge, to which we can have recourse, but it conveys nothing, which is really at variance with what had before been revealed upon the magnificent page of nature, and inscribed upon the deep tablet of our own heart.

Such appear to be the means, by which the Moral Law as the rule of divine government, and as the universal and unchangeable standard of duty, is made known unto man. Dwelling in the mind of Jehovah as its original and native home, it directed the whole process of creation. It stamped with its own image the whole face of nature; and hence it is prominently exhibited to the view of the discerning observer in the constitution and general administration of the universe. It is there exemplified upon a scale of magnitude and extent, which claims the notice and admiration of the highest created intelligences. It is displayed in a manner more or less clear and distinct in the rule of Providence here below. Thus Jehovah has not left himself without witness even in the works of nature, and in the course of providence. But besides this species of physical revelation of the will of God, there is in man's own heart, before it has been perverted by evil habits, and incrustated with

every prejudice and vile affection, a voice which responds to the loudest call of duty from without. This may be regarded as another powerful means of bringing man to the knowledge and cordial recognition of the Moral Law. It is the voice of conscience. Both of these sources of information have been shown by experience to be of themselves utterly inadequate, in the present fallen condition of our nature, to make man fully acquainted with his obligations. And hence a Revelation has been given, by which every doubt has been solved, and every error rectified. In this mirror of truth and holiness, therefore, we may behold a delightful and accurate reflection of that Law, which emanated from the eternal King.

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## SECTION V.

### THE MORAL LAW CONSIDERED IN ITS RELATION TO THE CHRISTIAN SYSTEM.

If such, then, be the origin, the extent and the vast bearings of the Moral Law: if it took its rise in the eternal and immutable nature and essence of Jehovah as a just and beneficent Being, and spreads over the whole surface of Creation, wherever there are subjects, to whom its provisions and requisitions can apply: if it be interwoven with the first principles of our own mind and engraven for our guidance in more luminous and unequivocal characters upon the pages of divine Revelation, it is an inquiry not less interesting than important, how it stands related to that

sublime and peculiar system of divine government, under which we are now placed. The Christian dispensation in its various principles and doctrines, privileges and duties, is a moral regimen, which has sprung from a particular state and relation of things. But if we take an enlarged and accurate survey of its nature and design, it will be found to be *the natural result on the part of God of that Law*, which we have already stated to be the Rule of universal government as the offspring of the eternal Mind. This is a view of Christianity, which appears to have been, to a great extent, overlooked, and hence that gracious provision for the evils attendant on the existing condition of our nature has been frequently represented as something which rises infinitely above and stands but remotely connected with that rule of administration, which was in force before its manifestation. The Law and Gospel have thus been injuriously contrasted with each other. The former has been regarded as a mere expression of dry and unbending justice, and everything gracious and beneficent in the dealings of Jehovah referred to the tenderness and compassion of the latter; and thus, instead of a system of uniform and progressive development the government of the universe is made to be shifted from its original footing, and to be conducted upon an essentially different principle of administration. We consider the Moral Law, on the contrary, as the great, immutable rule of proceeding towards rational and accountable beings throughout every period in the history of creation, and the Gospel itself but a modified application of that Rule to meet



the exigencies resulting from the disaster which befel our species. We regard it as a contrivance springing out of the original spirit and tendency of the Law adopted with a view to obviate an existing evil, rather than a scheme designed to supersede the genuine requisitions of that Law. We view Christianity, in fact, not as an arbitrary nor merely a sovereign institution, totally distinct from every principle, which had been hitherto recognized in the government of God, but rather as one important branch of the scheme, which had already been universally established—as a corollary naturally inferred from the glorious theorem of the divine perfections. It is an economy founded upon the same basis as the whole constitution of Nature. If, therefore, we could conceive a mind capable of appreciating the whole theory of administration, which had been originally instituted, and the principles of character, in which its various facts took their rise, it would perceive that the method of deliverance through Christ was an evolution of results, whose germ had before dwelt in all the fulness and richness of its capabilities in the bosom of the great Lawgiver.

In order more fully to unfold and illustrate this view of the question it is to be remarked that Benevolence, combined with and regulated by Justice and Holiness, forms the very essence of the Moral character of God, and these qualities form the basis and distinguishing features of that law, which he had prescribed to Himself as the Ruler of the world. The great principle, therefore, upon which the moral system was founded, appears to have been that Hap-

pineness should be communicated and Misery prevented in the greatest degree compatible with the demands of Truth and Justice. The diligent and faithful performance of duty was inseparably connected with secure and exalted enjoyment. The violation of its obligations with equal certainty and necessity called for punishment. This would seem to be the only method by which a moral government could be conducted. It is that alone, which is adapted to the nature of intelligent beings endued with a faculty of free and unconstrained volition and capable of exercising a discretionary control over the exercise of their own powers. It does not appear that there can in the nature of things be any other means of governing rational creatures in consistency with the essential principles of their being than that of connecting in a manner more or less direct the penalty of suffering with voluntary delinquencies and the fruition of happiness with the maintenance of purity, sanctity, and obedience. It would unquestionably be the dictate of benevolence, so far as was not utterly incompatible with this fundamental principle of a moral system, to adopt every means, which wisdom could suggest and power could carry into effect, to obviate incidental evil. Such gracious interposition would evidently come within the range of an administration conducted upon the principles of a Law, which is founded in the most expansive benevolence.

It was under the sway of such an economy that man was originally placed. He was endued with all the faculties and susceptibilities, which qualified him to be a subject of moral government, and therefore

subordinately a guardian of his own happiness. The Law, to which he was amenable, was calculated in the highest degree to promote his welfare and security. This was the object, which it kept most prominently in view, as connected with his Maker's glory. It could not, however, without utterly destroying its own character and annihilating the relation in which he stood to the Supreme Ruler, secure his welfare or avert the evils, to which he might expose himself, without an unqualified recognition of the great principle of retributive justice. When man had incurred the penalty which the Law, as applied to his character and condition, had denounced against disobedience, he stood in the peculiar and difficult predicament of one apparently doomed to inevitable misery by the very constitution, which had been established with a special and pre-eminent regard to his happiness. The spirit and design of the Law as a transcript of the beneficent character of Jehovah were favourable to his deliverance, but the fact of his being condemned by that specific enunciation of it, which had been delivered for his guidance and control, appeared to present an insuperable barrier to his escape. In this awful and perplexing conjuncture it was perceived by infinite Wisdom that the End of the Law might still be secured in affording man an opportunity of regaining his forfeited happiness, while its penal denunciations should at the same time be carried into adequate and satisfactory effect. The means by which this glorious object was to be realized, was the appointment of a Mediator, who graciously undertook to bear the penalty of the broken Law, in

order that its threatened victim might go free. Into the peculiar suitableness and propriety—or rather into the ultimate grounds and reasons of this benevolent arrangement we are scarcely competent to enter. We can perceive with sufficient clearness its admirable adaptation to answer the ends of government—as combining the promotion of happiness with the unbending enforcement of the sanctions of the Law. We can see how remarkably it blends and harmonizes the benign and exalted spirit of the law with the rigid execution of its letter. We see in it an irrefragable proof that the government of Jehovah is essentially a government of benevolence as well as of justice, and that if righteousness be the foundation of his throne, compassion is also the girdle of his loins.

We consider, indeed, that benevolence or a desire to promote the happiness of his creatures is so essential an attribute in the character of God, and forms so decided and prominent a feature in the great law of the universe that it would have been impossible for Him without denying his own nature not to have recourse to any justifiable and salutary means of obviating the direful consequences, which threatened to result from sin. A remedial plan, therefore, although man had no claim of justice for such an institution, was the natural and congenial effect of the conjoint operation of the everlasting attributes of Jehovah. It was a measure springing from the same generous and beneficent impulse, as led to the creation of the world, and to the appointment of a moral system.

The Christian covenant therefore—the loveliest manifestation of divine goodness and grace—was not something, which stood isolated and distinct from every former exercise or display of the Moral attributes of God. It was not a system of government founded upon some grand transcendental perfections of the Deity, which was at once to obliterate and abolish every record of former regulations, but it was rather the development of a germ, which the law of nature virtually contained within itself, and to the practical evolution of which the exigencies of fallen man afforded the direct occasion. It was an effusion of loving-kindness, which had lain concealed in the unknown depth of that benevolence, with the streams of which the whole universe is cheered and refreshed. This view of Christianity, instead of derogating from its dignity and importance, in reality enhances its value, and more firmly establishes its truth, inasmuch as it shows that glorious scheme to be interwoven with the essential perfections of Deity, and to be virtually embodied in the original scheme of his moral government. It stands forth to our view therefore, and urges its claims upon our acceptance in all the accredited majesty of an offspring of the Eternal Mind.

It must be obvious that in this view of the Moral Law as the basis of the Christian system and indeed throughout the preceding discussion, we consider it not merely as a positive constitution for the government of this lower world, but as an expression upon the most extended scale, of those principles of *equity and goodness* which collectively form the invariable

guide of Jehovah's conduct in all his dealings with his creatures. This universal rule of action is simple and uniform in its bearing, although it is infinitely varied in its application as circumstances and relations may differ. As the self-originating directory of the great Sovereign of heaven and earth, its main import appears to be that He should promote the happiness of his creatures in every way not utterly inconsistent with the inviolable demands of his Holiness and Truth. This always has been, and always must be the spirit of every economy which claims Jehovah as its author, and every interposition for the deliverance or remedy of his creatures, is but an additional evolution of this beneficent principle. Therefore it is, that we regard the great remedial system, which was graciously superinduced upon the defection and fall of man, not as the manifestation of a quality, which had been hitherto, as it were, an alien to the government of God, but as a modification, involving indeed the exercise of the most stupendous wisdom and love, of that benign principle which pervaded every department of the universe for the purpose of meeting a case of overwhelming disaster. It must always be borne in mind that the Love, which the covenant of redemption so strikingly and gloriously displays, existed in all the tenderness and intensity of its glow, before that beneficent plan was brought to bear upon the character and destiny of man. Christianity thus viewed ceases to be a species of gracious encroachment upon the great principles of the divine government, but it becomes closely and intimately identified with the character of



the Deity, and a component part of the eternal Law of the universe as administered by His wisdom and love. The immutability of Jehovah's purposes is vindicated, and Jesus Christ, as the great agent in the work of our redemption, is emphatically seen to be the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

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## SECTION VI.

### THE AUTHORITY OF THE MORAL LAW.

It has already been laid down that the Moral Law is the proper and ultimate standard of Human Duty, and that its requisitions are the only decisive measure by which the rectitude of actions is to be tried. Other standards may be erroneous, and are at best defective. Human institutions are but conventional arrangements established for the welfare and security of society, and draw all their power of binding either directly from the sword, or by derivation from a higher source. The susceptibilities of our own minds may be perverted by local prejudices and innate passions. Conscience itself may be blinded by ignorance, or warped by temptation. Amidst the uncertainty and weakness therefore which attach to every other rule of duty, it is important and delightful to reflect that there is a Law, to which we can with confidence look for direction—a Law which can neither err through mistake, nor fail through feebleness. It becomes, therefore, an interesting subject of inquiry — what really constitutes the authority, the obligations of this Law, as imposed by the Su-

preme Ruler of the universe, in the exercise of his sovereign Will, upon his rational and accountable creatures.

In proposing such a question, it becomes us to reflect with the profoundest reverence, and the deepest self-abasement, upon the Majesty and Sovereignty of the Being into whose prerogative in the establishment of the economical arrangement, under which we are placed, we venture to inquire. It is not from any presumptuous notion that we have a right to sit in judgment upon the plan of the Eternal, that this process of investigation is instituted. The constitution of the universe, in many of its primary reasons and remote relations, is utterly beyond our knowledge and comprehension. For the removal of many of its difficulties—for the elucidation of many of its obscurities—we must wait for the revelations of a brighter economy. In this introductory season of our being, however, it is delightful to be enabled to fix the eye upon some broad principles, in which the attributes of Deity appear to harmonize with what we instinctively conceive to be just and right, and upon which the mind may therefore repose in full and unhesitating acquiescence. In proportion, indeed, as we apprehend more clearly, and appreciate more distinctly, the great fundamental maxims of the Divine government, this satisfaction becomes more perfect and complete. Every deeper and wider survey which we take of the vast system in which our lot is assigned, conveys a stronger impression of the stability of the fabric, and of the correctness of the principles upon which it is erected: every ray which

plays around its pillars, is found to exhibit in a more engaging light the beauty and loveliness of its proportions.

The moral authority of a law; or the ground upon which it is entitled to observance, whatever may be the mode of its promulgation and enforcement, must be determined by a combined consideration of the competency of the Legislator, and of the design and tendency of the enactment. The last of these circumstances, indeed, cannot in all cases enter into the estimate of individual obligation; for the subject in many instances is utterly incapable of forming a just judgment of the bearing of the Law he is required to obey, on the comprehensive scale on which it is designed to operate; and the end of legislation would be entirely frustrated, if every person was to withhold his homage until he had been able to ascertain the benevolent origin and the salutary effect of the civil institutions under which he lives. It is not less true, however, that the consideration of its tendency, as it relates to the welfare of those whom it is designed to govern, lies at the foundation of every law and constitution, which prefer a genuine claim upon their regard. The Sovereign, who is possessed of adequate power, may issue and enforce edicts which are capricious, arbitrary, and malevolent in their principle, and pernicious in their practical results. As part of a general system, whose total overthrow might be more injurious than its occasional despotism was oppressive, it might be the duty of a subject to submit to such regulations. But a law bearing this

character, and a government conducted upon such a principle, would in their real and essential nature be destitute of all pretension to just authority, and could be enforced only by the addition of tyranny to malignity. The mightiest monarch upon earth never had nor could have the least moral right, upon any ground of honour or expediency, to introduce a single enactment which was at variance with the real interests of his subjects. The whole force of Law under every form of administration will be found ultimately to rest entirely and exclusively upon the effects which it is calculated to produce upon the happiness of those who are under its sway. This tendency is not to be estimated by any confined, partial, and inequitable regard to individual interests, but by a broad, benevolent, and expansive survey of all the relations which it involves. As, however, this comprehensive investigation would for the most part be impracticable, and in its application to the Divine Law, with our present measure of knowledge and information, absolutely impossible, the rule of duty is to recognize the obligation, which competent authority has declared to be binding, and transcendent rectitude and goodness have asserted to be benevolent and just. For all the ordinary purposes of government, it is quite sufficient to say that it is the Will of God that such conduct should be pursued. But if we carry the matter deeper, and inquire why we are bound to regard the laws of God, the ultimate reason will doubtless be found in the inherent excellency of those laws, and in their direct tendency to promote our own happiness as well as

the glory of their Divine Author. The happiness of the creature, as inseparably connected with the glory of the Creator, is, in fact, the great end of all the physical and moral arrangements of the universe, and the glory of God consists not in the abstract possession of any particular order of perfections, but in exercising these attributes in the communication of the means of enjoyment upon the largest possible scale consistent with the rule of eternal justice, and the unalterable principles of his own being. It is thus that the honour of God becomes essentially linked with the welfare of man. The latter is a mirror, from which the former is most conspicuously reflected, and the Moral Law is the medium, through which the rays are made to converge upon their object. We may conceive it possible, indeed, that the Divine Being, in the exercise of his uncontrollable power, should have appointed a law, which would only be productive of misery to his creatures, and He might enforce the observance of this law by penalties, which it would be additional misery to incur; but it is evident that obedience to such a regulation would be the result of necessity rather than obligation—of prudence rather than of duty. It is contrary to the first principles of our intellectual and physical constitution, that any living and sentient being should be morally obliged to do that, which is absolutely prejudicial to his happiness throughout the whole range of his existence. On the supposition of any other rule of government than that which is on the whole conducive to happiness, indeed, the motive to virtue and the means

of enforcing it would be altogether destroyed, as the observance or the neglect of it would lead alike to suffering, and the whole course of administration in such a case would be only one series of coercive measures and penal inflictions

The proper and ultimate authority of the Moral Law, therefore, unquestionably lies in the benevolence of its principle, and in the inherent excellency of its requirements as calculated to promote our highest good. It is on this ground, in the primary reason of the duty, that the child is bound to obey his parent, and as no being can be morally obliged to act in a manner that would be finally destructive to his own welfare, that duty at once ceases, when the injunction is seen to involve such a sacrifice. Thus, in our relation to the gracious Author of our nature, we are required to obey Him—not merely because He gave us our being—not only on account of His infinite power to punish us, but because, in the infinite wisdom and benevolence of his character, He has made it our happiness to obey Him—because He has given us a law, which unites and identifies our own welfare with the manifestation of his transcendent perfections. This is the benign principle, which runs throughout the whole range of his moral government, and, like a child who is confident of his father's concern for his happiness, we have only to learn His Will, in order to ascertain, with an accuracy far surpassing any result of our own abstract investigations, what is really conducive to our good. Hence the incalculable value and importance of a written law; not that, abstractedly considered, it



forms the ground of our duty, without any reference to its effects upon our final and eventual destiny, but that it affords a clear and unequivocal disclosure of the mode of conduct, by which it is the will of our Heavenly Father that we should be raised to happiness and glory. The law, therefore, is paramount and universal in its obligations, but it is such, as it involves the previous fact, that its recognition is the constituted means of our own welfare and security. It is not for us, under these circumstances, to form a graduated estimate of what we may conceive to be our duty, according to what may appear to us to be our interest, but to receive the intimations of our Heavenly Father's will, being that in which both combine, as cemented by everlasting love.

This appears to be the genuine ground, upon which the authority of the Moral Law, as binding upon rational beings, rests. It is that, which at once satisfies our own views of relative obligation between the Creator and the creature, and accords with the disclosures of revelation, as well as the universal testimony of experience in its bearing upon the fact assumed. They who resolve the law into a mere expression of sovereign will, apart from any reference to its influential tendency and design as it regards the happiness of its subjects, and maintain the moral right of Jehovah, in virtue of his absolute supremacy to govern them upon such a principle, seem altogether to forget that the exercise of that right, however uncontrollable, becomes materially modified when its objects are beings endued with a capacity of suffering and enjoyment. However complete may

be the dependence of such an order of beings upon the Power which gave them birth, for the original possession, as well as the continuance of all the faculties of their nature, equity appears to demand that no rule of government should be applied to them, which is not calculated upon the whole to promote their good. In the administration of Him, whose character is a combination of all that is superlatively excellent and benign, happiness must invariably be the end: misery in every modification or extent must be the incidental effect resulting from the maintenance of a system, which, upon the vast scale on which it has been instituted, is doubtless the most favourable that infinite wisdom could have devised for securing the welfare of the Universe. This is, in fact, the very ground upon which the Law is enforced. We are commanded to observe it, because our happiness is bound up in its requisitions, and the voice of universal nature is but an echo of the same truth.

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## SECTION VII.

### THE SANCTIONS OF THE MORAL LAW AS HARMONIZING WITH THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE.

IF a Law has been thus established upon just and equitable grounds of authority, and if it was intended to be adopted as the great Rule of administration in the government of rational creatures, it is clear that there must be some adequate means, by which its provisions may be enforced, and its design carried

into effect. As we have already stated that the authoritative ground of such a law was morally defined by its tendency to promote the happiness of those to whom it was intended to be applied, so it is abundantly evident that, such being its character, it should be ratified with adequate sanctions. A law would be of no avail as a mere expression of powerless and inefficient will. To be entitled to such a designation, it must not only point out what is just and right, but its injunctions, whether affirmative or prohibitory, must be seconded by such considerations as appeal at once to the most powerful and commanding principles of our nature. These circumstances, indeed, must not be of such direct and resistless force as would destroy the freedom of human agency, and annihilate the ground of moral responsibility, but they must be of such weight in the estimation of every man who duly reflects upon the consequences of his conduct, as to make him clearly to perceive, that obedience is security and happiness, and the reverse a pledge of all that is miserable and disastrous. It is, moreover, to be observed that, in order to render a law productive of its just and proper effects in the governance of a rational and accountable being, there must be an inherent and spontaneous response in his own bosom to its requirements. This is that Law of Conscience—that monitor within the breast, whose voice as originally attuned by consummate wisdom and love, sounds in unison with that law of positive and authoritative injunctions, which controls and directs

the moral relations of the universe. In the demands and directions of the latter, the former is naturally formed and constituted to acquiesce.

The first rudiments of those awful sanctions, by which the Law of the universe is enforced, are found in the constitution of nature, as it bears upon the happiness and misery of mankind. The result of those habits of conduct, which fall under the cognizance of the Law, is a voice which tells in accents loud and clear, and seems to embody the spirit of the maxim, that vice is its own punishment, and virtue its own reward. The whole history of the world may be regarded as a record of impressive and practical declarations, that there is a God who judgeth the earth, and that sooner would the universe sink back into nonentity, than that disobedience should cease to be pernicious. In addition, however, to this physical and providential sanction, which the Law daily receives, there is in our own breast a witness, who awfully confirms every sentence, which hath been passed against disobedience and transgression. In a court of judgment, whose functions are visible to no eye and audible to no ear, there is a sanction given to the awards of justice, which the criminal can neither gainsay nor despise.

Besides, however, these universal monitors, which are somewhat less palpable and express in their announcements, the Moral Law hath been repeatedly sanctioned by the most solemn and unequivocal annunciations of its Divine Author and Founder. In its character as a direct communication from above—as part of the great scheme of revelation, it has

been authenticated by every circumstance which was necessary to give it credibility and weight, by the suspension of the Laws of nature, and by the most sublime and overwhelming manifestations of the present God. But it has not only been thus evinced to be of Divine origin and appointment; but by the very same agency it has been clothed with an authority, which renders its requisitions paramount to every other demand. In accordance with its character and in fulfilment of its design as a rule of government, its sanctions may be considered as twofold—penal and remuneratory. When the first principle of the Moral Law was imparted unto man from the mouth of Deity, it was embodied in one simple injunction, but this expression of Divine will was enforced with the most alarming and peremptory announcement—“In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” This was the first statement in which the Moral Law was directly and authoritatively made known unto man: but in this brief formula the spirit of that constitution is displayed as it will continue to be executed throughout eternity. This coercive intimation of sovereign will indeed, as it was made the test of human character and the arbiter of human destiny, was the germ of all that has subsequently been unfolded and more fully revealed respecting the inviolable authority of God and the relative subordination of man. This was in fact altogether the point at issue. The particular fact in reference to which it was to be exemplified and determined, was in itself perfectly immaterial. It was selected by sovereign wisdom as best adapted to

embody the first draught of the great rule of government, and to exhibit the implicitness and universality of that obedience which on pain of his displeasure and of all the consequences it involves, He required at the hand of his creatures. Taking this therefore as expressive of the spirit of the Divine Law, and of the sanctions by which it is enforced, it is clearly seen to be not less pure and holy in its nature, and beneficent in its genuine tendency and design, than it is absolute in its requirements and awful in its penal ratifications. In the declaration attached to the first command, there is every thing expressed which can be conceived as dreadful in the catalogue of human sufferings—everything which the wrath of Deity as wielding the arm of omnipotence could deem it necessary to inflict.

The Law was imposed upon our first parents in the form of a covenant, the tenor of which was, that in case of a violation of its express stipulation, death would be the inevitable consequence. Every subsequent edition of the same great rule of action in its more explicit and enlarged forms is enforced by similar penalties. Personal guilt and demerit of the deepest and most aggravated kind—the loss of the Divine favour—the forfeiture of the Divine protection—the condemnation of the soul at the great tribunal of the Judge of quick and dead—everlasting misery beyond the grave—these are the combination of just and overwhelming penalties, which constitute the sanctions of the law of human conduct. These are the bright flaming swords which turn every way around this sacred path of duty, in order to



guard it against every encroachment. These are the ministers of indignation which are ready to seize and crush into irretrievable destruction every rebel against the throne and sceptre of the Most High. These sanctions, be it observed, under the modifications superinduced by the new and better covenant of human redemption, will uniformly take effect in every individual instance. The constitution of the moral world is not less uniform and unvarying in its operations and results than is that of the natural world. The law of action in both cases is perfect and definitively settled, and if the phenomena should not always be the same, it must be the consequence of some disturbance or interposition having the effect of preventing the evolution of their genuine and spontaneous functions. This was the method, by which the penalty of everlasting misery was graciously averted from being the necessary doom of man, and its equivalent inflicted upon his Substitute. By this compassionate contrivance of Divine wisdom and love, the penal sanctions of the Law were maintained in all their integrity and force; and in the sufferings of the Redeemer is seen more conspicuously and impressively than in the commingled flame of a thousand worlds, that "death is the wages of sin." That important event, therefore, instead of enfeebling the sanctions of the law, has infinitely strengthened them. Instead of shattering the pillars of the moral universe, and reducing the system into a chaos, it has established them upon a still firmer foundation, and cemented them into closer union. It has provided for the removal of the guilt of sin, while sin is at the

same time most unequivocally condemned. It has averted the infliction of the penalty of sin from the person of the offender without the slightest palliation of its enormity, or the reversal of its threatened doom.

But the Moral Law is sanctioned as the Rule of Divine government, not merely by the most dreadful and alarming penalties, but also by the most glorious and blissful rewards. In the business of legislation it is the welfare of the community, which is most distinctly and prominently kept in view; but in order to attain this object, it is necessary that obedience should be cherished and protected, as well as that transgression should be punished and avenged. Under any other system of administration innocence would be left without encouragement, and virtue without its reward. And hence it is the very end of all government to provide by all just and practicable means for the security and happiness of its faithful and loyal subjects. This principle is recognized to the full extent in the moral constitution of the universe. The character of the Divine law indeed, as an expression of the mind of its beneficent author, renders it necessary in the nature of things that He should be pleased with the diligent observance of it, and consequently that all the blessings involved in his favour and love should be immediately connected with the cordial and practical recognition of it. So far as it is embodied in the system of nature, or develops itself in the indispensable institutions of human society, it carries with it a remuneration as well as a penal sanction throughout the whole range of its operations. They who live in strict accordance

with the established order of nature, and in cheerful subjection to the injunctions of the civil magistrate, so far as they are in unison with the will of God, assuredly pursue the method which is best calculated to secure the largest measure of enjoyment. And if this object is but imperfectly and inadequately gained in this world, it is doubtless on account of the state of disorder and confusion into which this department of Jehovah's dominions has for a while been reduced by sin. The sublime theory of moral administration as conceived in the Eternal Mind, is doubtless that suffering should be invariably connected with sin, and happiness with piety and virtue. We behold this equitable rule of government sufficiently exemplified indeed in the present disordered and incoherent condition of our world to give us an insight into the general principle, and to impress our minds with the conviction that at some future period in the history of our being, we should find all that is apparently out of moral proportion rectified, and all that is discordant harmonized. But it is only by the light of revelation that all the mysteries of this perplexing subject are unfolded, and all its difficulties are removed. In that we at once behold the favour of God shining with benign lustre upon the observance of his holy law. We see the angels of glory who kept their first estate by obeying this great law of their being, basking in the glowing warmth, and glistening with the resplendent brightness of their Heavenly Father's love; and man, during his time of innocence, walking in close and exalted fellowship with his God. We find the protection and care of

God in this world, and the everlasting enjoyment of the presence of God in the world to come promised—not indeed as the reward of our own imperfect obedience, but as the recompence of grace awarded unto us for the merits of Him, who by his righteousness magnified the law, and made it honourable in our behalf.

These are the impressive Sanctions, by which the Moral Law is enforced. It proclaims in a voice of thunder and shows forth as in the lightning's flash the utter condemnation of all sin and disobedience; while, at the same time, it declares in accents of tenderness, and records in characters of love, the glory and honour and immortality, which are in reserve for the faithful and just. The Moral Law as surveyed in the light in which we have viewed it, is not an arbitrary institution designed only to serve a local and temporary purpose in the government of this transitory world. But it is the great law of rectitude—the immutable standard of duty throughout every region of the intellectual and rational creation—as wide as the universe and as lasting as eternity. It is the inviolable bond of union, the badge of social and federative alliance between the remotest provinces of Jehovah's dominions. It was right, therefore—it was necessary that its sanctions should be of the strongest and most engaging character—that they should be secure and unalterable in their nature, and proportioned to its magnitude and extent. It was not enough that there should be an accordant voice of approbation, or the reverse, answering within the breast to the requisitions of the Divine Law—

confirming its demands and justifying its prohibitions, to which some have so strangely and unaccountably confined its sanctions: it was not sufficient that its transcendent beauty and loveliness should be perceived and appreciated by the understanding, and that the conduct which it prescribed should be recognized by the conscience as alone worthy of a rational being: it would have availed nothing that it should be traced upon the page of the creation, and that it should have been inscribed in beams of light upon the tablet of Divine Revelation as an accurate expression of Jehovah's Will. To give it any real force—to invest it with adequate authority as the instrument of supreme government, it was necessary that these powerless intimations should be ratified and consolidated as rules of universal obligation—that the terrors of hell should give an awful emphasis to all which they denounce, and that the promises of heaven should gild them with their radiant lustre.

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### SECTION VIII.

#### THE REAL NATURE OF EVIL AS PROHIBITED BY THE MORAL LAW.

THE notion of a Law as an authoritative Rule of action immediately leads the mind to the consideration of a certain order of habits and pursuits, in which beings endowed with powers of Reason and Volition are forbidden to indulge. Such an institution, whatever may be the manner in which it is enforced, is designed to operate as a check upon the exercise of those propensities, from the uncontrolled operation of

which it is alleged that evil would result. But what is the true character—what is the essential nature of that evil, against which in its various modifications, the Law is intended to be a preservative? Evil has been usually divided into two kinds—physical and moral, and these have been regarded not merely as distinct in their immediate forms, but as totally different in their very being. Although, however, they may exist in some circumstances apart from each other, and may be considered in general as affections of different departments of our nature, yet there does not appear to be any solid ground for the absolute and universal disjunction of these habits from all necessary and direct connection with each other\*. Evil may be defined to be universally either immediate suffering itself, or what has the unavoidable tendency to produce suffering. I know of nothing else, which antecedently to all the views and associations springing from the present condition of human existence could have properly been called Evil. Everything, which throughout the whole range of its operations and effects is calculated to promote pure and unmingled happiness, is unquestionably entitled to be regarded as good. It is equally certain that whatever is painful in itself, or directly tends in any order of circumstances to occasion pain, cannot be viewed otherwise than as evil, although the ulterior advantages arising out of it may in some instances transform it into comparative good. Misery in itself,

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\* “Natural and moral evil are closely connected together in their consequences as well as in their origin.”—SUMNER, *Records of the Creation*, vol. i. p. 245.



from whatever cause it may arise, is an evil; and it is only under a system of government, in which it may be subservient to a higher order of enjoyment, that it can be contemplated in any other light. In any other condition of things it may be safely averred that suffering is evil, and the fruition of happiness is good.

If this view of the subject be correct, it seems to afford us a criterion by which we may determine the relative character of physical and moral evil. The former of these is a mere sensation, marked by varied degrees of intensity, and endlessly diversified in the peculiar modification of feeling, but universally painful and distressing. The latter, in its immediate influence, is not necessarily accompanied with emotions of suffering, but is a voluntary deviation in the exercise of the thoughts and affections, and in the regulation of the outward conduct, from those exalted relations of duty and subordination which the Author of Nature has instituted. This abandonment of the prescribed lines of required agency is evil, although it may not be instantaneously productive of a sensation of suffering, because it has an inevitable tendency to occasion such a feeling, and inasmuch as it is an encroachment upon the established order of things as adapted to universal good. It has already been stated, in the course of these discussions, that the present frame of nature is so constituted by its Divine Author, as virtually to embody in its own tendencies and relations the principles of moral obligation. The consequence of this close connection is, that when the latter are violated, the former are

found to rise into sympathetic action, as if to resent and avenge the wrong. No sooner had man become the subject of moral evil, by the wilful dereliction of his duty, and by acting in opposition to the declared will of the Author of his being, than the whole system of Nature rose in hostility against him. An innumerable train of physical evils, to which he had been hitherto a stranger, became at once inseparably attached to his destiny. His body became the seat of complicated diseases and infirmities, from which it had hitherto been perfectly exempt. His mind, which had hitherto been the hallowed shrine of pure and sublime affections, was at once thrown open to the incursions of every corrupt, malignant, and degrading passion, and from being the sanctuary of holiness, peace, and love, was transformed into an abode of impurity, depravity, and discord. The very elements of the material system—the influences of the heavens and the phenomena of earth assumed an altered aspect towards him, and, instead of being the ministers of his good, became, in many instances, the instruments of penal indignation towards him, in the infliction of suffering, pain, and death. Independently of the retributions of a future state, therefore, it is abundantly evident that even in the present world the admission of moral evil stands closely and inseparably connected with suffering or physical evil.

And from this representation we may be naturally led to inquire whether evil of every kind may be ultimately resolved into suffering as that which constitutes its real essence. We are accustomed, and



when the subject is properly understood, are justly accustomed, to regard moral delinquency as in itself eternally and unalterably base. But it is obvious that Moral Evil is such in relation to a system of things already existing, without which it could not have a being except in vague and abstract hypothesis, and with the harmonious operations of which it is utterly, and must of necessity be eternally incompatible. Its malignity bears a strict proportion to the injurious effects that would result from it, if it became universally prevalent. Its odiousness springs from the destructive influence which it would exert in proportion to its energy and extent. This view of the question is strongly confirmed by the fact that the physical act of the most atrocious crime has nothing in itself, which involves guilt and Moral delinquency. The material form, if we may so speak, in other words the mere act, as an exertion of physical powers, of murder, of theft, or of adultery has nothing in it which is vile or base. The process of taking away the life of a man under certain circumstances—the supply of the individual's wants—the union of the sexes have in themselves no necessary depravity or turpitude. The evil, which belongs to them in certain cases, arises wholly from the evil passions in which they originate, and their tendency under those circumstances to produce results so fatal to the security and happiness of mankind. It may, therefore, be fairly assumed that their real evil consists in the malignant effects with which they are attended, or the pure and benign affections which they outrage, and in the suffering which they conse-

quently inflict, rather than in any abstract qualities belonging to themselves considered apart from all their tendencies.

It must ever be borne in mind, however, that moral distinctions—as expressive of virtue and vice, wherever an opportunity is afforded of calling them forth into actual being, are absolute, unchangeable, and eternal, so that it is impossible in the nature of things to render the one laudable, or the other criminal or odious. This view, therefore, does not in any degree alleviate the enormity of sin, nor palliate the guilt of transgression; it only fixes the evil in the right place. From all that we know or can conceive—impiety—injustice—ingratitude—cruelty, must have an unalterable tendency to produce unhappiness, and therefore are evil; and the business of the Law, to which conscience unequivocally responds, is to prohibit Moral Evil, which alone falls under its cognizance, and to enforce its injunctions by making physical evil or suffering the result of disobedience.

Immediately connected with this part of our subject, is the consideration of Moral and Positive Laws as contrasted with each other. The distinction which has been generally made between these two departments of legislation, indeed, is far greater than appears to be warranted by their real difference. In their authority as expressions of the Will of the Supreme Governor, they carry with them precisely the same obligation. As they are both founded upon the universal duty of a creature to obey the commands of a wise and beneficent Creator, they stand upon the same footing, and embody the same

great moral principle. The difference is in the mode in which the Sovereign Will has been made known, and in the extent to which its preceptive intimations are intended to bear upon human character and conduct. The Moral Law, in the usual acceptance of the term, in its great fundamental requisitions, is interwoven with the whole frame of Nature, and is inscribed in imperishable characters upon the vast roll of Creation. It is co-extensive in its authority and direction with the existence of those relations which subsist between God and man. As a transcript of the Divine mind, it is indeed not less the Law of angels, than it is the local directory of men in this remote district of Jehovah's dominions. It is as much the code of Eternity, as it is the statute-book of time. A positive Law, on the other hand, though it be doubtless founded upon an adequate reason in the established constitution of things, does not appear to hold the same universal connection with the order of nature. So far as we are able to trace its bearings, it is only a temporary enactment made known by express revelation, arising from some peculiarity of character or condition, and binding only so far as is definitively specified in the communication or institution, in which it is embodied as a Law. Independently of such an appointment, there was nothing in the previous arrangement of things, which could have led the mind to form any idea of a design on the part of the Supreme Legislator to impose such an injunction. There might have been nothing, which the eye of man could discern, to mark out its peculiar excellency, as compared with

many other observances which might have been enjoined. There was nothing, perhaps, by which it appeared to be linked in harmony and congruity with some other institution that went before or followed after. There might, in fact, be no reason beyond the sovereign will of the great Arbiter of the Universe, why this was selected, out of many other measures that might have been equally appropriate, to be a rule of conduct to his creatures.

Of these observations, the appointment of the tree of knowledge of good and evil to be a test of obedience—the institution of the Sabbath—the rite of Circumcision under the old dispensation, and of Baptism under the new, and a very considerable number of the ceremonial ordinances of the Jewish economy, may be considered as affording evident examples. These, and other similar enactments were positive, inasmuch as they were established by direct authority, and did not appear to maintain any necessary connection with those great principles of duty, which were embodied in the general scheme of Divine government. But they were Moral precepts, in that they conveyed an unequivocal intimation of the Will of that Being, whom it is man's first duty to obey. Nor is this obligation in the slightest degree less than if they were enforced by ten thousand reasons, and the voice of universal nature proclaimed their paramount necessity. The mere act of Jehovah indeed, in establishing a rule of duty, makes that to be virtue which previously might have been a matter of indifference, and possessed no moral character, and that vice, on the other hand, which, antecedently



to such appointment, involved no moral turpitude. He has as just and unquestionable a right to establish laws of this nature as he had to frame a system, and to govern it by those rules of rectitude and justice, which are incorporated into its whole substance. Every deviation, therefore, from the appointed order of the universe—whether it be expressed in moral or positive injunctions—every violation of the acknowledged rules of duty—every encroachment upon those relations of subordination and dependence, in which man stands towards his Maker, the Law prohibits as evil.

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## SECTION IX.

THE CONSUMMATION OF HAPPINESS AN INFALLIBLE RESULT OF  
THE PERFECT OBSERVANCE OF THE MORAL LAW, AS AN  
EXPRESSION OF THE DIVINE WILL, AND AS BINDING ON  
THE HUMAN CONSCIENCE.

THE End of the Moral Law, wherever its provisions are fully carried into effect, must be accordant with its origin, and its results congenial with its design. Taking its rise in the infinite benevolence of Jehovah, directed in all its bearings and requisitions by His wisdom, and sustained in all the plenitude of its authority by His power, this bright Offspring of Eternal Love, has been sent forth to traverse the length and breadth of the created universe, as at once a faithful monitor against evil, and a benign Minister of Good. These are the traits, which, so far as our clouded vision is capable of recognizing them, invariably mark its character. This is the first

great principle of the Divine Law—this is the master-spring in all its complicated movements—to forbid nothing, but what has an inevitable tendency in its more proximate or remote effects to produce suffering, and to command nothing, but what is equally calculated to promote the happiness, security, and well-being of those, who have been placed under its control. This is the foundation upon which the sublime and beneficent Theory of the Moral universe is built, and with a reference to which all its parts and proportions are adjusted\*. There is the same never-failing tendency in the Moral Law, to preserve the happiness of the rational and intellectual creation unimpaired, that there is in the great law of physics, in its various combinations of force to maintain the harmony and equipoise of the vast system of material nature. On the supposition of beings possessed of rational and voluntary powers, it is obvious that there may be a partial and temporary interference with the operations of both. Man may within certain limits divert the elements from their spontaneous course of action, and employ them for good or evil according to his own inclination. He may upon a diminutive

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\* It is remarkable that Bishop Butler, notwithstanding that he makes the Conscience, as an original faculty of the human mind, to be the great arbiter of moral distinctions, nevertheless regards the creation and government of the whole universe as based in benevolence or a disposition to promote the happiness of the creature. This is the principle uniformly maintained in these pages. “Perfect Goodness in the Deity is the principle from whence the universe was brought into being, and by which it is preserved; and general Benevolence is the Great Law of the whole Moral Creation.”—BUTLER’S *Sermons*, serm. 8, pt. 1st.

scale set them in hostile array against each other, and make the principle or force, which was designed for unmixed good, an occasion of overwhelming evil. In the same manner he may pervert and contravene the Moral Law in its numberless ramifications and demands, so as to render that, which was intended to be the bond of happiness, an occasion of misery and woe.

When the constitution of the Universe was first established, it was placed upon a footing and subjected to a law, which could not fail to secure the blessedness of those, who were willing to enter into its spirit, and cheerfully to submit to its authority. All the evil, which has been known—all the suffering, which has been experienced throughout the whole range of the universe, has resulted from disobedience to the Law, and from rebellion against the sovereign. As long as the apostate angels kept their first estate—as long as their sublime endowments were employed in their Maker's service, and the march of their glowing energies moved in harmony with His acknowledged Will—all was peace, tranquillity, and safety, and their felicity knew no change, except as it might occasionally rise to the more fervid raptures of exalted and impassioned joy. With man the case was analogous. While he retained the purity and integrity of his nature—while he continued to walk in the serene light of the Divine commandments—while he afforded a practical compliance with the expression of his Maker's Will—the end of the law, as designed for the promotion of universal good, was perfectly realized in his happiness. He occupied his place and fulfilled

his duties in the vast scheme of creation, in a manner entirely accordant with the relations in which he stood, and the functions he was appointed to discharge; and thus the harmony of the Moral system was maintained, while its ultimate object was at the same time most effectually secured.

No sooner, however, had man, in the exercise of the voluntary powers, with which he was invested, ventured to deviate from that path of rectitude, which the law had marked out for his course, than a change of condition was experienced by him. The system was at once disorganized. Everything began to be out of joint. The prime mover in the curious machinery of his nature was no longer able to control the subordinate springs and movements, upon whose regularity and precision the harmony of the whole was dependent. Like a planet driven out of its appropriate orbit, he became at once the sport of contending and conflicting influences, while every thing, which was most lovely and delightful in the constitution of his nature, was placed in the most imminent danger of utter and irremediable destruction. In other words, no sooner had man transgressed the appointed and authoritative law of his nature, than man began to suffer. If sin had never gained an entrance into the world, we are abundantly authorized by reason and revelation to assert that penal suffering would have been likewise unknown, and that sorrow and pain would have been eternally excluded from the universe. The system of created nature as an evolution, in its original state, of the principle of the moral law, is doubt-

less calculated for the production of perfect and unmingled happiness; but it formed an essential condition of that system, that those who occupied its rational departments should possess the discretionary power of transgressing, and of thus perversely marring their own blessedness. Moral government requires such a condition as its very basis, and its advantages can no otherwise be secured than at the risk or by the trial which it universally involves. And when perfect obedience is the result of this process of probation, happiness is secure and complete. Into whatever department of intellectual being—into whatever rank of rational existences sin or the transgression of the Law has not gained an entrance, there it may confidently be affirmed, that the stream of enjoyment has flowed pure and unperturbed. There conscious guilt has never awakened a chilling apprehension, there inordinate desire, ungoverned passion, pride, envy, malice and revenge have never excited the fever of disquietude, and the fang of remorse has never lodged its venom in the heart. All, on the contrary, is there benignity, peace, and joy: and not only does an absolute freedom from sin secure an absolute exemption from suffering, but the relative, the graduated absence of the former will bear a strict proportion and analogy to that of the latter. The misery of any order of rational beings, must in every case, both in its nature and extent, be the result of their sins, and to adopt the language of the Apostle, where sin aboundeth, suffering, unless obviated by forgiving and sanctifying grace, will much more abound.

And if this be the real condition of things, if the transgression of the Law be the true cause of all suffering, it must be obvious, that under an economy, from which sin is altogether banished, happiness must be pure and unalloyed. A capability of suffering, indeed, I consider as an indispensable attendant on moral government. It is that which most powerfully binds the subject to obedience, and gives the law all its effective authority. But the fact of suffering, at least in its penal character, was doubtless unknown until the commission of sin gave occasion to its development. This may in some degree account for the temerity with which our first parents allowed themselves to violate the Divine law, and to expose themselves to the dreadful penalty which had been denounced. Hitherto they had been strangers to any experimental sense of the poignancy of bodily pain and the bitterness of an accusing conscience. And although this in no degree justified their conduct or extenuated their guilt, amidst the numerous and engaging motives to fidelity and obedience, which the goodness of their Sovereign and the blessedness of their own condition might suggest to them, yet it may in some measure tend to explain what has always appeared to me one of the most mysterious moral phenomena in the whole history of our nature—how a being perfectly pure and immaculate in his affections, and with every feeling so strongly inclined to what was good, should so readily swerve from his duty. It may be that the experience of suffering, or the perception of its effects in beings of the same nature, as the just consequence



of transgression is essential to the stability of moral government, and that the apostate angels were allowed to lapse, in order more deeply to impress upon every rank of intellectual existence, the duty and blessedness of obedience. It may be impossible in the nature of things, that the great ultimate end of Moral Government, should be attained through any other medium, than that of a system of discipline, in which the abuse of voluntary powers and rebellion against lawful authority, were visited with condign punishment. The present condition of our nature is evidently an introductory dispensation. It affords an example of government, in which the grand principles of justice and rectitude are indeed distinctly recognized and displayed, but affording at the same time the most unquestionable symptoms of a deranged and imperfect economy. The rule of administration is obviously equitable and right, but the subjects to whom it is applied evince a continual disposition to resist its authority, and to frustrate its provisions. Hence the whole scene presents the appearance of a struggle between contending principles, and as the moral scheme is thus imperfectly developed, the result in the condition of those who are governed, is equally mixed and indecisive. The present state is neither that of perfect purity and justice, nor of entire and unmingled depravity; and in the same manner it is neither a condition of consummate blessedness nor of utter wretchedness. It is a combination of both, or rather it is a constant effort towards the complete realization of either. It is a contest of opposing elements, an oscillation between conflicting powers.

But when the design of the system has been attained—when the object of this preparatory discipline has been realized, the respective elements, which had been in conflict, will be entirely and finally separated from each other. A new order of moral government will commence. Sin and misery will be bound together in indissoluble union, and the community to which they belong will be removed from all fellowship with the rest. The principles of equity, purity, and justice, on the other hand, will be drawn forth from beneath the mere cloud by which they had been partially covered and overwhelmed, in all their glory and excellency. The struggle will then be over. Everything will have found its place, and have fully worked its effect. Then God will be known not merely in His will, but in the actual accomplishment of His purpose. His law will be seen, not only in its tendency and general requisitions, but in all the perfection and sublimity of its nature, and in all the fulness of its effects. The period of trial and temptation—of partial obedience and imperfect happiness—will then have passed away, and the reign of absolute purity, conjoined with the most consummate felicity, will eternally prevail and flourish. Under that bright and blissful economy, the provisions of the Christian covenant, as the noblest and most beneficent evolution of the first principle of the Moral Law, will be carried into full effect. It will be seen to afford a most glorious illustration of the accordant attributes of Deity—to harmonize the claims of conflicting principles—to blend the interests of heaven and earth in a manner which will command the pro-

foundest adoration of every intelligent nature throughout the Universe of the blest. Then the veil, which once rested over the plans and dispensations of Jehovah will have been rent asunder, and the sunshine of perfect love will spread like a robe of light over the scene: the sanctuary of his secret purposes will be thrown open, and all that ignorance or partial knowledge might have deemed as arbitrary, will be recognized as wise and good. Duty will be perceived in its reasons—labour be appreciated in its fruits—and suffering be estimated by its results. And thus taught by experience, or instructed by methods of illumination adapted to the faculties of their nature to recognize the goodness of their sovereign, and the benevolent equity of his law, the various orders of being will enter upon a career of purity, and glory, and blessedness, to which time can mark no bounds, and space assign no limits. In their ascending progress along the scale of beatific existence, the Law of holiness will still be their companion and guide, and as their character is gradually moulded into a more perfect conformity to its dictates as a transcript of the Eternal Mind, they will realize such scenes of glory and felicity as will transcend all that they had previously conceived in the brightest visions of their faith, and the most glowing raptures of their love.

It is thus in close and invariable connection with the Moral Law as its great and ultimate Rule of judgment, that the functions of the Conscience as an important faculty of the human mind are to be investigated and ascertained. Conscience is a suscep-

tibility of impression—an organ of moral feeling, guided by the Understanding, gradually adapted to its office by the various influences with which it is surrounded, and entirely subject, for the correction of its decisions, to the paramount Rule and authority of the Divine Law. It is not, therefore, to be regarded as an infallible instinct planted in the mind, forming itself the final standard of right and wrong, but rather as a moral instrument naturally fitted by its divine Creator to act as a just censor of conduct, but ever requiring the light of correct information to direct it, and the sanction of a higher authority to give efficiency to its announcements, and to invest it with a power of absolute and universal obligation.

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## BOOK IV.

THE LEGITIMATE USE OF THE IMAGINATION AS SUBSERVIENT  
TO THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION.

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### PART I.

THE PROPER USE OF IMAGINATION.

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#### SECTION I.

THE DIFFERENT DEGREES IN WHICH IMAGINATION IS FOUND IN  
DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS.

EVERY man who reflects, must be conscious of a Power, which presents to the view of his mind innumerable forms of things without the immediate intervention of the Senses. In different individuals indeed, this remarkable faculty is found greatly to vary, as well in the clearness of its representations, as in the energy and rapidity of its movements. In some it is found capable only of exhibiting in slow succession to the eye of the understanding, and often with much obscurity of conception, the ideas, which have been derived from objects the most prominent and familiar. Its operations are attended with no fervour of emotion, kindle no glow, and awaken no sentiment bearing the remotest alliance to that excitation of the mental affections usually termed rapture. All,



on the contrary, is calm and unruffled—a flow of conceptions characterized by uniformity of feeling, and diversified only by the various aspects of the tracts of thought through which it passes. The man who is distinguished for this torpor and inertness of the imaginative Faculty, may indeed be subject to strong and impetuous passions, which are properties rather of the animal than the intellectual nature, and resemble rather the murky glare of a volcanic eruption, than the glowing radiance of the sun; but to the nobler and finer frenzies of the mind—to those beams of light and heat which illumine and warm the soul, without devastating all with which they come in contact, he must always continue a stranger. He may, if ignorant and uneducated, be possessed of his full share of that kind of sense, which is more immediately connected with the affairs of common life, and which, in ordinary circumstances, is, after all, as Burke well remarked, the best sense. But, to a very refined order of affections, or even to very enlightened views of religion, and an exalted pitch of devotional feeling, there is no great likelihood that he will attain; for either of these attainments requires a sensibility of heart and an abstraction of mind, attended with a power of combination, of which he is capable but in a very slight degree. But if trained up in the institutes of science, and habituated to the severe exercise of intellect, he may possess himself of an enlarged and varied store of ideas, and arrange them with consummate skill, for the purposes of reasoning

and investigation. Like him who penetrates the bosom of the earth, and labours through its dark recesses in quest of precious ore, he may explore with success those departments of philosophical or even theological inquiry, where bare knowledge is the object of pursuit. In his progress, tardy and wearisome as it may appear, yet if steady and uniform, he may fall upon many a gem, and discover many a vein of rich and invaluable truth. He may be an Edwards in logical acumen; a Locke in metaphysical sagacity; an Euclid or an Archimedes in Geometry, or a Newton in the various departments of mathematical and physical investigation. But the creative energy of the poet, or the glow of the impassioned orator, are endowments, which obviously form no part of his character. It is said of Malebranche, with all his metaphysical acuteness, that he had such an utter distaste, and even dislike for the pursuits of Imagination, as to be unable to read the noblest and sublimest poetry without a feeling of deep disgust.

In such persons the Imagination, though it cannot be said to be wholly absent or extinct, where clear ideas of outward objects are formed, independently of the present operation of the senses, holds in the scale of mental powers a most subordinate, and, comparatively speaking, insignificant rank. It is not only kept in entire subserviency to the faculty of Reason, as it unquestionably ought to be, but it seems destitute of all native vigour, hardly exhibiting any signs of life, nor venturing to assert its congenial liberty of action. And so

far as the faculty may be supposed to exist in its genuine character, we can only compare it to an eagle pinioned to the ground, and scarce capable of ruffling its plumage.

In others this faculty appears to greater advantage, and assumes a much livelier character; exerts a wider influence, and rises to more daring heights. In such cases it is found, if not to predominate in the soul, and to control the operation of all the other powers, at least to mingle, in some measure, with every process of thinking and feeling, —to infuse life into every idea, and to give its own peculiar tincture to all the activities of the mind. The man of warm and and vigorous imagination differs as widely, and may be as easily distinguished from him in whom its range is confined, and its movements languid, as a tree clothed in all the verdure of spring's luxuriant foliage, from that which stands in naked desolation, having been stripped of its leafy honours by the violence of the autumnal blast; or as youth in all the beauty of its form, all the symmetry of its features, and all the agility of its motions, from the coarse and athletic vigour of manhood, or the shrunk and withered aspect of decrepitude and old age. But even in persons who are endowed with this faculty in a high degree of energy and cultivation, it is by no means uniform in its operations. In some it assumes more of the light and playful character, and in this modification of its nature it is generally denominated *Fancy*. And though *Fancy* and *Imagination*, with respect to their etymological origin, spring from sources very closely allied, and

are often promiscuously employed, yet, in strict precision of language, they may be clearly distinguished from each other. Both, indeed, constitute but one faculty or power of the mind; but they respectively express, when placed in contrast to each other, different exercises of that power. Fancy is marked by delicacy of perception, by quickness and facility of combination, by the volubility of her turns, and her versatile aptitude to almost every variety of application. Imagination delights in forms of grandeur, in scenes of magnificence, and in energy of action. Fancy is charmed with the soft and the beautiful both of nature and of art. Imagination exults in the sublime and the daring. The one delights in sprightliness and vivacity of spirit, the other prides in majesty and strength. Fancy resembles the rapid, though not impetuous current, whose surface reflects the splendour of the sunbeams, as it purls along its pebbled channel, or is curled by the western breeze; while imagination bears a stronger likeness to the mountain torrent, which rushes downward, impatient of control, and seems to direct its own course. Or, to institute another comparison, the operations of fancy are pictured in the wanton play of light and shade, exhibited on a spot partly illumined by the penetrating rays of the sun, and partly darkened by the superincumbent foliage of a tree, as the wind rustles among its branches; while those of imagination may be more aptly represented by the vivid coruscations of lightning.

In illustration of these remarks we may observe, that among that class of modern authors, whose

productions are characterized by a rich exuberance of fancy, we should rank Cowper as the most distinguished of the poets, and Addison as holding the same station among the prose writers. Neither of these, indeed, nor many others, who might be deservedly associated with them, were utter strangers to the higher efforts of imagination, but the regions of fancy were the scenes most congenial to the character of their minds, and formed the peculiar province of their genius. Of those who have been most distinguished for vigour and sublimity of Imagination, and have soared aloft—

— *Extra flammantia mœnia mundi,*

Milton and Young stand foremost, perhaps, of any writers, which ancient or modern times have produced.

But, though fancy and imagination are clearly susceptible of this distinction, a distinction which it were easy to illustrate at greater length: in theological discussion they are generally used as nearly, if not altogether, synonymous. The following inquiry is designed to embrace the provinces of both; and for the sake of simplicity we shall consider the imagination as combining all the powers, modifications, and exercises of that rich and comprehensive mental endowment, which properly constitutes *genius*. For, although the metaphysician, the critic, and the mathematician, may each of them be said to have a genius for his own department of science—importing nothing more than that he has a peculiar aptitude of mind for that particular branch of knowledge, yet genius, as the endowment of the poet or the orator, is

generally considered as a species of inspiration, and consists of a faculty of rapid combination and invention, which in reality are nothing else than varied exercises of Fancy and Imagination. In the present discussion, therefore, we shall include, under the general idea of imagination, all those modifications of intellect and feeling, which fancy and genius are separately or unitedly designed to express.

It has often been a matter of doubt how far this vigorous and active Faculty of the human mind should be allowed to be exercised, and may be made advantageously to bear upon matters of religion, and points of revealed truth. Some, in whose mental constitution it does not appear to form a very powerful ingredient, would have it banished altogether from within the precincts of the sanctuary, as the race of poets was to be excluded from the commonwealth of Plato. They would dissociate Imagination from all concern or connexion with the grave questions relating to eternal things. They condemn her character as light; they dislike her language as affected; they disapprove of her attire as meretricious. Others there are, naturally of a different temperament, and habituated to a different mode of thinking and feeling, who carry their notions to an opposite extreme. They will give a favourable reception to nothing, whatever may be its acknowledged importance, unless it comes recommended by the clear stamp and signature of Imagination. Truth, in the sober garb of reason, and enlivened by chaste and pure feeling, they are disposed to reject as uninteresting common-place. They are



apt to overlook the plain, in order to gaze at the beautiful, and to forget the generally useful, in their admiration of the merely splendid. The doctrines of religion, in order to meet their taste, and to engage their affections, must be decorated with the flowers of fancy, and illustrated by all that is new and striking in ideal combination. To them the canopy of heaven itself has nothing attractive or worthy of attention, except when it is arched with the rainbow's resplendent semicircle, or arrayed in the rich drapery of clouds tinged with sunbeams. Unhappily for them, or perhaps fortunately for their real advantage, the sources are but few, from which they can derive the gratification which exactly suits their peculiar modification of taste.

To arbitrate between these two parties, or rather to define the legitimate use of the Imagination, as it may be applied to the important subject of Religion, is, assuredly, a very difficult matter. To those in whom the faculty of Imagination is in no danger of exercising a predominant and injurious influence over their other powers, this question indeed can be of no great interest; and its determination is chiefly important, as it may teach those who are possessed of that endowment in a somewhat more than ordinary proportion, how far they may advantageously employ it, and to what dangers and abuses it is liable, as it refers to the most weighty of all human concerns.

Having, therefore, in a former part of this Inquiry endeavoured to mark out the boundaries, which should limit the operations of Reason in the inves-

tigation of divine truth, we shall now proceed to institute a somewhat similar investigation with respect to the faculty of *Imagination*. In pursuance of this plan, we shall first state some of the Uses to which Imagination may be legitimately applied in the treatment of divine truth, and then point out some of the Evils and Excesses, into which it is in danger of running, if immoderately indulged, and allowed to break loose from the restraints of reason and sound judgment.

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## SECTION II.

### THE ADVANTAGE OF IMAGINATION FOR PURPOSES OF ILLUSTRATION.

ONE of the first and most important Uses, to which Imagination can be applied in the elucidation or enforcement of religious truth, is that of *lively and appropriate Illustration*. To remove all doubt and hesitation that may be felt respecting the lawfulness or expediency of this method, we shall only refer to the sacred writings themselves, which abound with every variety of figurative representation and illustrative allusion. The Bible is, indeed, a book pre-eminently distinguished by this, as well as many other peculiar characteristics, that, while it is marked throughout by a unity of principle, and consistency of facts, yet this principle is developed and these facts are arranged with every possible diversity of manner. While the system of doctrine, which it unfolds, is every where essentially the same, it can never be

charged with a heavy and uninteresting uniformity of aspect. It is, on the contrary, exhibited in manifold positions, presented in the most engaging lights, and furnished with a multiplicity of appendages, which may allure the eye, fix the attention, and impress the heart. To borrow the language of architecture, while the *effect* is designed to be *unique*, the style is occasionally varied, with a just adaptation to circumstances, from the plainest, soberest simplicity, to the highest degree of rich and splendid decoration. The scripture, indeed, stands at the widest possible distance from the narrow and technical in sentiment or diction. And without adopting the theory of Hutchinson, that the Bible is a pandect of philosophy as well as of divine knowledge, involving in mysterious symbols the whole of natural, no less than theological science, it may safely be affirmed, that its language is often exceedingly intellectual and elevated. There is no species of composition, and scarce a figure of speech, the object of which is to inform, to move, or delight the human mind, but is found there employed. The rhythm of verse, the harmony of prose, the allegory, the parable, the apostrophe, the metaphor, and the antithesis, in short, the whole *ordonnance* of figurative combinations is there brought into service; and we might almost venture to assert, that, amidst the extensive and diversified range of matter and of manner presented in the volume of inspiration, each one of the nine Muses (if such an allusion be pardoned) might fix upon a portion as constituting her peculiar department. The reason is obvious; the Bible takes man as it finds him, and as he is in himself, possessed

of various faculties, each of them affording an inlet through which knowledge may be instilled into his understanding, or feeling be communicated unto his heart. Hence it demonstrates to his Reason; it paints to his Fancy; it threatens, persuades, and entreats, in order to give the needful impulse to the Will—the Conscience—and Affections. The voice of truth, precisely suited to the character of man, is distinguished by different notes and gradations. Breaking the monotony of one unvarying style of address, it is sometimes found to utter forth, as in peals of thunder, the sounds of denunciation and alarm; sometimes to speak in the calmer dialect of argument and earnest expostulation; sometimes to attune itself to such accents of soft and evangelical sweetness, as may charm the ear of the soul with the melody of harmonious numbers. While it is impossible for us to perceive the exact line of demarcation, and to determine how far the different penmen of scripture were under the influence of inspiration with respect to the phraseology, which they employed to convey their ideas, whether the guidance of the divine Spirit proceeded farther than infallibly to secure the truth and accuracy of the sentiments to be expressed, or extended to the suggestion of every form of speech which they used, it is certain that a difference of *character* is obvious in their writings. Nor is this diversity of style confined to the Old and New Testaments, as contradistinguished the one from the other. This perhaps might have been expected from the dissimilarity of the dispensations, under which they were respectively composed; but it is also equally observable in the writers

of either portion of the sacred volume viewed by themselves. What, for example, can be more strongly contrasted in the method of composition, and in the faculties more immediately addressed, than the Apocalypse of St. John, compared with the Epistles of St. Paul, or the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles?

It is upon these general principles of scriptural authority, and of human character, that we maintain the legitimacy and utility of employing the Imagination as an instrument for illustrating the various branches of divine truth. It is the lot of man in the present state of existence, that he is forced to contemplate all objects, however abstract in their character, however remote from gross matter in all the properties of their nature, however pure, spiritual, and ethereal in their essence, through the medium of images derived from things sensible and corporeal. In a future world he will doubtless be endowed with other inlets of perception, and be possessed of faculties, which will enable him to hold communication with the bright essences around him, without the intervention of those channels of intercourse which are so useful to him here below, but whose operations are at the same time so imperfect and confined. During his pilgrimage upon earth, though he is conscious of the workings, the hopes, and aspirations of an immortal principle, he is wrapped within a garb of mortality, through the narrow rents of which he receives all the forms and ideas of things, which he is privileged to treasure up in his memory, or to harbour within his breast.

Hence arises the importance of the talent of

suitable illustration, and of exhibiting under proper analogies, the principles which it is designed to unfold. Who has not felt the need of this method; who has not felt refreshed and relieved by its judicious adoption, while listening to descriptions, or perusing treatises on the abstruse points of theology and metaphysics? While the question was stated in the language of abstract truth, with whatever logical accuracy it might be propounded, the ideas presented themselves to the mind as in a mist; they appeared before it, borne as in vehicles of air, too light, too subtil, too attenuated to afford it the opportunity of a firm and vigorous grasp. Like the incorporeal forms which ranged through the fields of Elysium, they yielded to the touch, and vanished from the hold, before they could be seized. The whole region of thought seemed to be a land of shadows, where there were many floating notions, but no clear and definite conceptions. The mind, therefore, felt uneasy, until it could embody these evasive phantasms, which seemed to mock it like visions of the night, in some shape of palpable and coherent representation, that would enable it to survey them at its leisure, and examine them in all their bearings.

It is, doubtless, owing to the difficulty of forming clear and distinct views without those helps of illustration, which serve as a species of material organ for communicating intellectual and spiritual ideas into the mind, that discourses of abstract reasoning, however skilfully arranged, and however conclusive in argument, leave the generality of hearers without impression. The matter of the discussion may be



good and important; the method of handling it may be logically just and sound. Each successive statement may confirm and establish the preceding, as every additional stone in a compact and well-founded edifice serves to consolidate the lower parts of the structure, and locks them together into a firmer coherency; but they comprehend not the main design and therefore they cannot appreciate the symmetry and beauty of its respective compartments, nor receive from it that deep and salutary effect, which, if presented under livelier and more familiar images, it could not have failed to convey. Or, to change the figure, they have not a clue to conduct them through what, to them, has all the appearance of a labyrinth. They allow themselves to be led through its windings, and a bright idea may sometimes glance upon their minds, but as it is not one of a series, which gradually unfolds itself to the view, they suffer it to drop, and as they feel no interest, they treasure up no sentiment.

To obviate this inconvenience, to assist the reasoning Faculty in this impotency of her attempts, arising from the inaptitude or the incapacity of her subjects, Imagination supplies a most valuable expedient. Nothing can more decisively show the necessity of this aid in the majority of cases, than the frequency with which the Saviour of the world himself,—He who “spake as never man spake,” was pleased to have recourse to it. Indeed, with the exception of some sententious maxims occasionally delivered to his disciples, and of brief remarks thrown out in the course of ordinary con-

versation, the whole mass of his instructions consisted of allegories, similitudes, and metaphorical illustrations, addressed to the Imagination of his hearers. His discourses, indeed, were not distinguished by flights of artificial eloquence, and efforts of rhetorical display. His whole style bore a most evident impression of the exquisite tenderness of his heart, the placid tenor of his life, and the transcendent dignity of his character. His preaching was the most remarkable example that the world has ever witnessed, of simplicity without meanness, of pathos without effeminacy, of sublimity without hyperbolical excess.

Taking the example of the Redeemer as his rule and his authority, but obviously regarding those differences and modifications, which the character of the age or nation may render expedient, the teacher of divine truth, whether through the medium of the press, or of the public duties of the ministry, will be anxious to seize upon the understanding and the heart through the powerful instrumentality of the Imagination. While, indeed, he will be desirous of communicating the knowledge of "heavenly things," he will not disdain to make use of "earthly things," as the channels of conveyance. To assist him in this undertaking, and to enable him to accomplish it to any purpose in the present enlightened state of the community, it will be necessary that his mind should be stored with a plentiful supply of rich and varied knowledge. It was remarked of the excellent Dr. Watts, by Dr. Johnson, a biographer that will not be charged with partiality, that in his hands

everything was converted into theology; and Bacon had long before charged Plato with having spoiled his philosophy, by intermixing with it the principles of his religion, as Aristotle ruined *his*, by tincturing it throughout with the subtilties of the science of dialectics. But, however philosophy may be corrupted by being amalgamated with the elements of a false and fantastic theology, there can be no doubt,—for it is the testimony of the truly enlightened of all ages,—that the true philosophy<sup>1</sup> can be rendered eminently serviceable in the illustration of the true religion. It is the man of Imagination alone, however, who knows how it may most advantageously be turned to this account; for it is he alone, who, by an intuitive glance, perceives the resemblances of things, traces their analogies, combines them into such forms of splendour, and unites them together by such ties of friendly affinity, as that they may mutually illuminate and sustain each other. An individual thus endowed, provided his mind be cast in the mould of the Gospel, and his whole character be impregnated with the principles of piety, stands on an eminence, which commands a prospect of almost the whole sphere of the intellectual world; and every discovery of science, as well as every phenomenon of nature, offers itself to his service. Nor is there a single province within its vast extent, from which he cannot draw something that may throw light upon subjects of revealed truth. He can accompany the astronomer throughout the whole progress of his wonderful study, pursue the brilliant track of his discoveries, attend him in his demonstrations, and

launch forth into the interminable ocean of his probable and plausible conjectures. He can attach himself to the philosopher of nature, and watch his movements, while he penetrates into the recesses, and dives into the secrets of the material world; while he propounds the laws and classifications of the mineral and botanical kingdoms; while he experiments on the powers and effects of chemical combination; while he decomposes the drop of water, separates the constituents of air, and analyses the ray of light. He may share in the studies of the anatomist, notice the astonishing skill displayed in the construction of the animal system, the mutual dependency of its parts, and the mysterious process of its organization. He may turn inward upon himself the piercing eye of the metaphysician, explore the provinces of thought, distinguish the powers of the mind, and investigate the origin, the formation, and the association of ideas. He may direct his attention to the institution of that federal economy, by which the individuals and respective orders constituting a social community, are harmoniously blended together. He may glance upon the interior springs of government, estimate the principles of legislation, and scan the policy of states. He may visit the painter's or the statuary's scene of labour, whose matchless workmanship in the one case teaches the pale canvass to glow,—in the other the marble rock to breathe. He may inquire into the laws to which music owes her power to charm; he may observe or experience the effects produced by the modulations of sound, attune his ear to an

exquisite discernment of the vibrations of a concord, and feel the full force of the sympathy which they awaken in the human spirit. He may descend from the heights of science, and abandon the walks of art, and barely contemplate the face of nature, and the aspect of human life, as daily presented to his view. He may look up and behold the sun in his native lustre, the moon in her reflected light, and the clouds now thickening into a gloomy squadron, and now pendent in silvery fleeces on the bosom of the expanse. He may look around him and watch the progress of vegetation as modified by the vicissitudes of the seasons, the verdure of spring, the plentiful maturity of summer, the decay of autumn, and the naked desolation of winter. He may cast the eye of observation over the scene of human life as diversified by age, sex, or pursuits, by the shades of character, and the gradations of society. He may survey the influence of opinions, the development of principles, the working of passions, as called into action by the regular course of events, or by a combination of unforeseen occurrences.

It requires only an Imagination trained in the discipline of piety, and ever alive to its impressions, to render all these accomplishments, whether literary or philosophical, whether they be the fruit of deep and patient investigation, or the result of a cursory tour through the world of science, aided by a habit of accurate observation, eminently subservient to the illustration of divine truth. Quintilian takes much pains to show that the *Orator*, in order to be duly qualified for his office, ought to be acquainted in a

degree more or less, with every art and science. Geometry, music, and other departments of human knowledge, which a superficial observer would deem wholly unconnected with his province, the critic pronounces eminently useful, and, under many circumstances, absolutely necessary to him. A similar remark the philosopher in *Rasselas* has applied to a poet, and Bishop Horne to a divine; and, doubtless, in each case, under certain limitations, with perfect truth. Very extensive literature and profound scientific attainment, under the ordinary circumstances, and with the present capacity of man, may be desirable, rather than possible to the active Christian instructor. But a store of general knowledge, an acquaintance with the outlines of the most distinguished philosophical inquiries, and, above all, a thorough insight into the human character in all its varieties, and as it is unfolded amidst all the changes and evolutions of earthly destiny, it is in the highest degree expedient that he should possess. These constitute the materials of the "mental magazine," which Imagination arranges and "speech bur-nishes" for use. And though Holy Scripture itself be, and always ought to be, his chief armoury, yet, that he may dexterously and efficiently use the weapons there supplied, he must be trained in the discipline of other studies. To borrow the illustration of an eminent female writer\*, he must imitate the example of the Israelites of old, who did not

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\* Hannah More.



disdain to sharpen their weapons at the forges of the Philistines.

To exemplify at length the remarks which we have here made on the use of Imagination, as an instrument of theological illustration, derived from the principles of literary, philosophical, or practical science, would lead us beyond the limits prescribed to this Inquiry. It may be sufficient to refer to those who have been most eminently endowed with that faculty, and by general acknowledgment have most successfully applied it to the purpose here mentioned; to Barrow and Taylor, and Hervey and Heber, with many others of living celebrity, whom it would be invidious to mention—men who differ, indeed, in the shades of their theological sentiments, and in the extent of their respective attainments, but all distinguished for the brilliancy of their thoughts, the splendour of their style, and the vigour of their imagination; or, in some cases, perhaps, more correctly characterized by the devout liveliness of their fancy;—luminaries of different magnitudes, and moving in different spheres, but each radiant with light, and drawing the eyes of admiring multitudes, by the force of their attractive influence. These are the men, who, in their respective ages, redeem the character of religion, extend her empire over the unreclaimed provinces of human thought and human feeling, snatch the magic wand of Fancy, and wrest the powerful sceptre of Imagination from those, who would employ them for the base purposes of decoying the unwary, throwing the illusive colour-

ing of virtue over the blackest character of vice, and of enslaving their unhappy victims to the tyranny of lust and passion. They who are conversant with their writings can alone appreciate the felicity with which they have applied the phenomena of nature, the institutes of society, and many of the principles and discoveries of science, to the elucidation of the various parts of the Christian system. They have availed themselves of all these methods to carry conviction to the judgment, delight to the imagination, and impression to the heart. The regularity, the harmony, the magnificence, which characterize the starry firmament, have been devoutly considered, in imitation of the inspired Psalmist, as affording a marvellous display of the power and wisdom of the Creator, and as exhibiting in the most amazing light the magnitude of his condescension, in noticing, with such intensity of regard as is involved in the economy of redemption, a creature so insignificant as man\*. The laws of civil polity, and the whole process of human judicature, have been convincingly brought forward, in illustration of the mediatorial scheme, both with respect to its necessity and perfect equity. The operations of natural causes, once involved in obscurity, but since brought to light by the sagacity of genius, and the experiments of philosophy, and a variety of elemental affinities and combinations still utterly unaccountable, have been made

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\* It is quite needless to refer, in illustration of this statement, to the splendid "Discourses on the Christian Revelation, as connected with the Modern Astronomy;" a work which, on its first appearance, ran with such electric rapidity throughout the land.

powerfully instrumental in reconciling the mind to the more abstruse and mysterious, though at the same time vital and essential, parts of Christian theology. And we have continual proofs before our eyes, with what deep and salutary effect the affairs of common life, the more obvious and familiar aspects of nature, and more especially the social, the relative, and the domestic affections, in all their modes of operation and endearment, are made use of, to convey unto the mind the lessons of piety and truth.

In the discharge of the ordinary duties of the Christian ministry, the imagination should doubtless, for the most part, confine itself to these latter sources of illustration; and the wise and judicious labourer in the vineyard of Christ, whatever may be its difficulty, and whatever may be the sacrifice and self-denial which it requires, will feel it a duty to impose upon himself this restraint. The higher efforts of this noble faculty, its more excursive ranges into the regions of the natural and intellectual world, provided its pinions be of sufficient strength to bear him in such flights, he must reserve for more suitable occasions; otherwise he will but embarrass with illustrations too complicated to be understood, with allusions too far-fetched to have their force perceived;—and thus, what was designed to enlighten his hearers will only confound them; what was intended to explain the truth, and to better-informed and more cultivated intellects *would* have explained it, to them will only involve it in all the obscurity of an enigma.

## SECTION III.

IMAGINATION SERVICEABLE IN THE FORMATION OF A LIVELY  
AND IMPRESSIVE STYLE.

ANOTHER use to which Imagination may be advantageously converted in the treatment of divine truth, is, that it is calculated to afford great aid in the formation of a lively, forcible, and efficient Style. Some there are, indeed, who reject all refinement and energy of language, and every species of decoration, arising from a skilful and well-arranged combination of words, as utterly unsuitable to the simple and unaffected majesty of Truth. To confirm their opinion upon this question, they refer with much confidence to one or two imperfectly understood and ill-applied passages of St. Paul, who declares to the polished and dissolute Corinthians, that he came not to them in excellency of speech or of man's wisdom,—a phraseology importing no more than that the apostle did not calculate upon their conversion through the mere force of rhetoric, nor attempt to captivate their understanding by strains of secular eloquence. But, that the prevailing style of St. Paul, viewed independently of that inspiration, under the influence of which it was formed, rose much above mediocrity, and frequently partook of the imaginative, is evident from the whole tenor of his epistles. It was, doubtless, no mean exhibition of oratorical talent, that could have led his hearers to take the apostle for the divinity, whose special office it was to preside over literature

and eloquence. We fully agree with Chrysostom, in his Treatise concerning the priesthood, that in a Christian minister\* the polished smoothness of Isocrates, the swelling vehemence of Demosthenes, the majesty of Thucydides, and the sublimity of Plato, may be easily dispensed with. But a style of address far removed from poverty and meanness, from all that is meagre, grovelling, and insipid; and though sometimes “familiar,” yet never “vulgar,”—a style that will not degrade the lofty themes which he undertakes to discuss, it is in a high degree expedient that he should possess. In confirmation of this remark, we may refer to the authority of the royal preacher, who declares respecting himself, that he sought to find out *acceptable words*, and these words of the wise he affirms to be as goads, and as nails fastened by masters of assemblies†.

But here let us be rightly understood. Against that plain, earnest, and unvarnished style of pulpit instruction, which has been so successfully adopted by many of our most estimable divines, both living and departed—a style which may be truly said to have simplicity for its character, usefulness for its end, and the testimony of every enlightened con-

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\* Εγώ δε ει μεν την λειοτητα Ισοκρατους απητουν, και Δημοσθενους ογκον, και την Θουκυδιδου σεμνοτητα, και το Πλατωνος υψος, εδει φερειν εις μεσον ταυτην του Παυλου την μαρτυριαν. Νυν δε παντα εκεινα αφημι.—Chrys. Περι Ιερως. lib. iv.

† בעלי אספות a phrase very variously rendered: literally “Masters of Collections.” It is generally considered as intended to express the office of the ministers of the Church, those whose business it is to preside over the assemblies of the saints, and to carry home the truth unto their hearts and consciences.

science as the stamp of its approval, we have nothing to object. We have often witnessed with delight the flow of that clear current of sound speech, which, running on a level with the ordinary capacity, appeared most admirably calculated to diffuse the verdure of Christian graces and the fertility of Christian virtues over the surrounding regions. Not to appreciate that method of handling divine truth, which experience has proved to be in general the most effective,—a method regulated by the discipline of a sound judgment on the one hand, and enlivened by the fervour of unaffected feeling on the other, would assuredly betray the most inconsiderate levity. We do not hesitate to avow, that, admitting of such exceptions and qualifications as may arise from peculiarity of character or circumstances, this is the just, the legitimate, the scriptural method of discharging the duties of the ministerial office; and happy, supremely happy, must be deemed the individual, who has attained to this wise medium.

But having thus explained ourselves upon a point, where misconstruction would have been most fatal, we proceed to remark, that there *is* a style of speaking and writing on sacred subjects, which, possessing nothing of the simple but its homeliness, nor of the judicious except its tameness, is calculated neither to interest the intelligent, nor to enlighten the ignorant mind, neither to rouse the lethargy of the languid, nor to keep pace with the energy of the impassioned. While it forms the vehicle of unpremeditated thought, the



difficulty of expression superinduced upon that of invention, and the uncouthness generally characterizing all raw produce, may offer some excuse for the tardiness of its movements, and serve as some palliation for its delinquency. But when it presumes to appear in print, whether it creeps with monosyllabic steps, or drags along through words and periods of ill-arranged proportion, the mind becomes inevitably torpid, while engaged in watching its progress. There are no brisk sallies of the intellect grasping at those collateral ideas, which throw a momentary light upon that more immediately before the mind. Like a ship fraught with the produce of Indian climes, there may be many precious and valuable truths deposited in this dull and unwieldy structure, but there is no tide of feeling, there is no breath of imagination to urge forward its floating weight, and consequently all is sluggish, inanimate, and unimpressive. There may be all the dryness of logic, but little or none of its conclusiveness.

To obviate this evil, and to infuse vigour and spirit into the character of style, is a legitimate use of Imagination. This active power, when sanctified by divine grace, becomes an effective auxiliary to the understanding, in collecting the materials of a suitable medium for the communication of its ideas, and to the heart, for the expression of its feelings. Like the fabled messenger of the gods, she is ever ready to be on the wing. With prompt celerity she darts upward to heaven, and with the same speed descends to earth loaded

with fresh intelligence, and enriched with the fruit of her observations. She ranges over all the diversified scenes, the beautiful, the magnificent, and the picturesque of nature; she bends her ear to the melody of every pure and holy sound; she directs her eye to every spectacle of the fair and lovely in creation. On the productions of devout genius she gazes with raptured admiration: and exquisitely alive to all the felicities of thought and combination, to all the graces of language, to every nice touch of modest and ingenuous art, she becomes gradually imbued with the spirit of the objects of her contemplation, and imparts something of their form and colouring to the fruits of her own conceptions. By means of such a process carried on through the agency of the Imagination, style is formed, and purified, and elevated. The first attempts at composition, in cases where that faculty bears a powerful sway, will, indeed, generally be distinguished by more than an adequate measure of ornament. The tissue of thought will be marked by much superfluous embroidery. But even this, in the opinion of the celebrated Roman critic, is preferable to the opposite defect. Luxuriance may be repressed, the exuberant efflorescence of spring may be pruned away, but barrenness cannot be supplied. The evil in the former case seldom fails to be corrected by years. As the judgment ripens, as the ardour of invention is tempered by the coolness of habitual reflection, as the eagerness of unfledged efforts at soaring is succeeded by a power of regular and uninterrupted flight, fantastic

decoration will give way to real beauty and solid excellence :—

——— Nature now  
 To the experienced eye a modest grace  
 Presents, where ornament the second place  
 Holds, to intrinsic worth and just design  
 Subservient still.

Style modelled on these principles, animated by these energies, and chastened by these correctives, will suit itself to every subject within the whole province of theology. It will describe with fidelity and exactness; it will explain with clearness and order; it will exhort with fervour and earnestness; it will illustrate with beauty and success; it will reason with force and vehemence, and conclusiveness; it will advance in the calm and steady attitude of the plain and simple; it will rise to the rapid and sublime; it will burst forth into the eloquent and impassioned, as the nature of the subject may require; and it will carry light and conviction into every bosom as it proceeds.

When we attribute this importance to style, an affair which many persons consider as utterly unworthy of their regard, it will not be supposed that we view it in a state of separation from the thoughts, of which it is designed to be the vehicle. A choice selection of words, appropriate phraseology, a skilful collocation of terms and arrangement of sentences, the disposition of every component part of the structure, in the most advantageous manner for light and beauty and strength, is indeed important, and will be despised by none

but those who are ignorant of its influence in the recommendation of the matter. But isolated from this matter, it would be perfectly worthless. The hue of health on the cheek, and the brilliancy of the eye, are both objects pleasant to behold ; but the one is derived from the silent stream which flows beneath, and the other is kindled by the buoyant principle of vitality which resides within. Style and sentiment, indeed, we are inclined to think, are much more intimately connected with each other than is generally supposed. It is not unusual to hear it remarked of a literary or theological treatise, that the style is admirable, but the thoughts are mean and ordinary ; and the reverse of the observation is perhaps equally frequent. It may readily be granted, indeed, that a profusion of brilliant words may be amassed together, where there is so little vigour of conception, and such a vacuity of sober and just thought, as to leave the whole composition almost without a meaning. But, as verbal phraseology constitutes the only medium through which ideas can be conveyed, it is impossible that the character of the one should not be greatly modified by the other ; and it would seem, that a tide of noble and majestic thoughts can no more flow through the channel of a creeping, grovelling, and inanimate style, than the waters of the Ganges could roll within the banks of a rivulet.

We have dwelt longer than we should otherwise have done upon this question of style, because, in theology, it seems to be more generally disregarded

and undervalued than in any other branch of literature. Some feeling, as they justly ought, the supreme importance of the *matter* of their exhortations or discussions, have been honestly, we had almost said devoutly, betrayed into the mistake that language was an affair of so very subordinate importance, as scarcely to deserve a moment's attention; and we have many valuable pieces of argumentative and practical divinity bearing evident marks of this error. Others there are guilty of the same fault through an original deficiency of the faculties most essential to the formation of style, and that deficiency in no degree supplied by discipline and mental cultivation. Both these classes should remember, however, that while Christianity, in all its parts, is possessed of a native sublimity and dignity and beauty, which no adventitious majesty or decoration of language can further exalt or embellish, it may be very easily degraded and impeded in its effects by the opposite of these characteristics in style. It is obviously expedient, therefore, that every faculty of the mind, in all the variety of their operations, should be made conducive, by mutual combination and connexion, to the improvement and perfection of an instrument, which is capable of exercising so powerful an influence upon the advancement and interests of divine truth.

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## SECTION IV.

IMAGINATION USEFUL AS THE MEANS OF REALIZING AND  
EMBODYING INVISIBLE SCENES.

A THIRD use, for which Imagination may be employed with much advantage and effect in the treatment of divine truth, is, to *give a realizing view of invisible scenes, by exhibiting them under striking and important emblems, and by embodying abstract principles in forms of palpable and vivid representation*. Closely allied to this process of Imagination, is that species of lively realization, which the celebrated author of the Treatise on the Sublime, has denominated *Phantasies*; and his follower, Quintilian, by a literal translation, has expressed by the term *Visions*; and both have given suitable illustrations of it from the several writers of antiquity. It is that wonderful operation, by which remote objects and distant events, whether real or fictitious, are brought before the mind with such clearness and force as if they were sensibly present. To produce this species of illusion is the peculiar business of Imagination: and so unlimited is its power in this respect, where it is possessed in a high degree of vigour, that it can lead the mind at pleasure through every variety of place and scene. It can raise out of non-existence a host of personages suited to its purposes, and clothe them with the attributes of real and active beings. It

— can give to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.



It can endue with the principle and the functions of vitality the inanimate parts of material nature: it can, on the other hand, give a body to the operations of mind; it can present the beings of the spiritual world in the attire and costume of the natural; it can bring together persons and things most widely separated from each other; it can portray actions and proceedings in the most affecting forms of reality, whether recorded of the past, or predicted of the future.

Of such a powerful engine of impression, it was impossible that religion should not have attempted to avail herself. Hence, we find that works of fiction, imbodying the most vital and important truths of Christianity, abound among us. These, indeed, are executed with various judgment, and display much inequality of talent; some exhibiting a masculine vigour of understanding, a thorough acquaintance with the world, and a profound knowledge of the human heart; others, characterized by puerility of thought, narrowness of view, and most lamentable deficiency of taste. In some of these pieces, such as the *Dialogues of Hervey*, and the *Cœlebs* of Mrs. More, imaginary characters are introduced in order to discuss the several questions of moral and religious truth. Instead of formal disquisition, and a regular explication of these topics from the pen of the author, he is supposed merely to lay the scene in which the creatures of his fancy are to perform their respective parts, and to end the debate by bringing it to the conclusion which he deems most just and satisfactory. In other works of this descrip-

tion, partaking more of the character of the allegory, inanimate objects are endued with life; the faculties of the mind, the affections of the heart, the appetites and passions, the graces, the virtues, the vices, and all the distinguishing constituents of human nature, are considered as possessed of separate and independent existence, and are represented as discharging their several functions in accomplishing the main design. The advantages of this species of personification, while its dangers must be acknowledged to be great if carried to an undue extent, are manifold and striking. The human mind is naturally fond of action; it delights in the exercise of the senses. Novelty and beauty of sight, liveliness, and harmony of sound, rapidity of motion, the operations of intellect, and the working of passions as exhibited in outward form and feature, excite in it stronger emotions than could be awakened by the mere abstract contemplation of these objects. To this is owing the superior pleasure which the admirer of the drama derives from the actual performances of the theatre, compared with that which he is capable of enjoying in the retired perusal of the piece. And the same circumstance accounts for the deeper impression produced by a discourse from the pulpit, delivered with every advantage of voice and manner, than would attend the reading of the same composition in the stillness and quietness of the closet,—a difference of effect, which occasioned Queen Anne's grievous disappointment (if we remember right) on perusing a sermon of Bishop Burnet, which she had ordered him to print. We may explain, upon the same principle,

the intensity of interest with which every devout reader, and some more distinguished for splendid talent than deep devotion, including Johnson and Swift, and others of the same school, accompanied Bunyan's Pilgrim in his progress, notwithstanding the numerous faults with which that singular and, on the whole, excellent production abounds; while Doddridge's admirable treatise, the *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, conducted in the calmer and more simple method of statement, exhortation, and appeal, requires a mind disciplined to a much severer order of taste and feeling before it can rivet the attention with any thing of a similar force.

Such is the constitution of the mind of man, or rather, such is the predominance which the powers of Sense exercise over those of bare Intellect. On this principle it is found, that, in proportion as a representation of facts approaches to what is ostensible and familiar in life and nature, as abstract truth is clothed in the language of imagery, and brought as it were in contact with the sensitive organs, the deeper impression it produces, and the livelier interest it awakens. It is, doubtless, in condescension to this infirmity, that the Supreme Being was pleased, in ancient times, so frequently to exhibit himself in visible emblem; and throughout almost the whole of Revelation to represent Himself as possessed of the form and constituent members, as well as many of the faculties and affections of human nature. In those descriptions of his character and attributes, indeed, which are designed to inform the understanding, He is clearly asserted to be a Being

of infinity, without passions, and without parts. But with respect to his conduct as more immediately connected with mankind, He is described as endued with the organs, as actuated by the feelings, and as performing the functions peculiar to a human being. He is said to have eyes to see, ears to hear, feet to walk, hands to grasp, anger to resent, and love to cherish; though we must be perfectly aware that these operations as performed by Him must be accomplished in some very different way from what is known to men. In the same manner all that has been revealed, and all that we know of angels and spirits in all their gradations of dignity and excellence, is no more than has been communicated through the medium of sensible images. No book has been written apparently under a more vivid recollection, that man is dependent for his leading ideas upon the exercise of his senses, than the Bible. Spiritual in its disclosures and in its purposes beyond any other volume upon earth, it notwithstanding speaks the language, and employs the figures and illustrations suitable to beings immersed in matter. It embodies the thoughts of heaven in the words and phraseology of earth.

The Imagination, being the faculty most concerned in the exercise of taste, may be considered as an interlocutor between Sense and Reason, between matter and spirit; and as all feelings and impressions are dependent upon the powers of sense, he who can most skilfully employ the Imagination in adapting and communicating the views of the intellectual and

spiritual world to these powers, will be most successful in awakening deep and powerful emotions.

With a view of exemplifying these remarks, let us consider the effect of Imagination as it may be employed in carrying home to the mind and conscience some of the leading doctrines and facts of the Christian religion. Let the state of man by nature, as he stands related to the demands and obligations of the divine law, be the topic of discussion. While the question of his guilt and condemnation before God is calmly and deliberately argued; while it is proved by Scripture, and further corroborated by the actual evidence of experience; while this strain of dispassionate argumentation is maintained, the understanding indeed is enlightened, and may be convinced, and thus an important point is gained towards producing the desired impression. But when this has been accomplished, let the scene be enlivened by the introduction of the Law as a distinct, independent, and animated being. Let her be brought forward as the offspring of the Eternal, bearing, in the essence of her character, the awful majesty of his holiness, and the inflexible sternness of his justice, clothed with authority, and claiming, as her subjects, every order of rational and intelligent beings, within the limits of the universe. Let her be heard proposing the original compact in Eden, pronouncing her threatened award on its violation, and repeating her denunciations in the lightning and thunder of Sinai, testifying her indignation by such scenes of terrific grandeur, as made

every living thing to flee in consternation from her presence. Let her be exhibited as girt with a two-edged sword, and pursuing every human soul in its natural condition, as the manslayer was pursued by the avenger of blood, in order to vindicate the honour of Jehovah, by inflicting the full measure of his wrath. Let this process be strikingly and vividly presented to the mind, and there will not only be a conviction of the understanding, but it is scarcely possible there should not be also excited strong emotions of heart. Every sense will be interested, aroused, and terrified, and thus become auxiliary to the accomplishment of the desired object. The voice of the Law will be *heard* to condemn; her arm will be *seen* as raised to strike.

Let us again contemplate the use of Imagination as it may be exercised in the representation of the wonderful method of salvation through Christ. The grandeur and the simplicity united in this plan, the greatness of its design, the beauty and coherency of its parts, and the clearness with which the whole of it is displayed on the page of Holy Scripture, render it a subject eminently suitable for the employment of that sublime faculty. The consummation of the scheme of human redemption, effected in the death of Christ, is a theme on which Young, and Barrow, and Maclaurin, and others of illustrious name, have lavished all the splendour of their comprehensive and exalted genius. The man of serious and devout judgment, unaccompanied with the lively powers of fancy and imagination, may, indeed, unfold the principles of the covenant of redemption; he may define



its conditions, and urge the acceptance of its blessings, but this he will do in a dry and didactic manner,—a manner calculated neither to engage the attention, nor influence the affections: whereas the man of imagination will place the whole in a light, clear, interesting, and impressive. He will seize upon the most striking analogies of nature, and, combining them with those schemes, proceedings, and operations, which are observable in the wide aspect of human society, he will exhibit the whole in one scene of lucid representation, on one spot of distinct and definite contemplation, which will give prominence to every point, freshness to every colouring, and precision to every line of demarcation. He will show the necessity of this plan on general and public grounds, on the principles of universal government, the sanctions of law, and the immutability of justice. He will point out the evils which would seem inevitably to result from the pardon of sin without the intervention of a mediator, the influence which such an example would probably exert upon the higher orders of intelligence, and the effect which it might have in disorganizing the whole system of the universe. He will represent the utter discordancy with all the rules of supremacy, of allowing offence to pass without adequate punishment, and the absolute necessity, in order to secure the subordination of the subject, to carry into unmitigated execution the stipulations of an established compact. Having brought in the whole human race guilty, and apparently condemned to suffering by the announcement of an irreversible decree; having

shut up the whole mass and every individual of the species within the enclosures of this prison of despair, while every attribute of Jehovah, except his Mercy, conspires to bar the doors against their egress, he at once changes the scene: he pours a flood of light upon this habitation of darkness and woe; he directs the eye to an object, the very sight of which is health to the sick, hope to the forlorn, liberty to the captive, and salvation to the lost. The eternal Son of God he exhibits as descending in the chariot of his love; as surrounded by a retinue of attendant spirits, who rejoice to celebrate his triumphs, with the key of man's deliverance suspended from his girdle; as at his birth commencing the evolution of that purpose of grace, which from eternity had been folded up in the bosom of deity; as carrying it on in every successive act of his life, and as triumphantly consummating it in his death. He will present to the mind every lovely feature in the character of the Redeemer, the unexampled kindness and condescension which engaged him, though rich, for the sake of man, to become poor; the meekness, the gentleness, and the benevolence of his life, and every affecting circumstance of his death; his entire suitableness as an example, and his all-sufficiency as an atonement.

He will then set forth the *benefits* of this plan, and its admirable adaptation to the accomplishment of its proposed end. He will show its effects as they respect both God and man, how they unite as it were the interests both of heaven and earth, crossing the immeasurable interval, which sepa-

rates the throne of God from the humble abode of man, expanding into immensity, and stretching forward into eternity; promoting the glory of God, and simultaneously advancing the highest happiness of man. He will describe this method, not only as an effectual remedial system for all the evils and disorders which have befallen the human race, but also as affording a most illustrious display of all the divine perfections; as forming the bright centre to which all the rays of the divine majesty converge, and from which they are again reflected in resplendent lustre upon the intelligent universe; as constituting a mirror in which the character of Jehovah appears endowed with every element, and clothed with every attribute, that can render it great, and lovely, and venerable. The several qualities inherent in the divine mind, he will represent as here combined together, in such well-balanced proportions, as to form one perfect model of unrivalled beauty and excellency, all harmoniously united, and each lending its aid and co-operation in exalting the transcendent glory of the other; wisdom dignified by power, and power regulated by wisdom; mercy sustained and invigorated by justice, and justice tempered and mel-  
lowed by softening infusions of mercy; justice erecting her pillars upon the imperishable basis of Jehovah's truth, and the warm light of mercy's beams moving around with delightful and radiant play, without melting them down into a mass of disorder and confusion. Thus, in the salvation of man, accomplished through the mediation of

Christ, every attribute of the divine character has its demands satisfied, its claims vindicated, and its essential dignity unfolded, displayed, and exalted. The Gospel, therefore, is a scheme of grace, in which the glory of God, and the happiness of man, are found inseparably connected. And it is the business of Imagination to exhibit this connexion through the medium of every process and analogy that is tangible, realizing, and striking.

We might extend this remark to almost every principle and every truth of the Christian religion. However abstract in their nature, however subtle and abstruse in conception, and however partially revealed, Imagination will give them body and substance, and make them pass in visible representation before the mind. It is Imagination which portrays the king of terrors in all that is dismal and appalling in his pale and gloomy visage, in all that is awful and melancholy in his appendages and attendant circumstances; that groups together the unequivocal symptoms of approaching dissolution—the ceasing pulse, the swimming eye, the quivering lip, the last struggle of nature, the groans of the expiring, the frame now cold, motionless, and extended; the shroud, the coffin, the funeral pall, the darkness, and the silence of the tomb; the lamentations of the surviving, the tears of forlorn widowhood, the cries of bereaved orphanage, the anguish of broken-hearted friendship; all that is awful and distressing in the discharge of Death's commission, into one spectacle of pain, and fear, and woe, which it is impossible the most thought-

less should contemplate without emotions of seriousness and dread. It is the Imagination which wafts the mind beyond the gulf of death, and conducts it to the scene of Judgment; a scene, the most awfully important, the most dreadfully magnificent, that will stand on record in the annals of God's creation. To call it the assizes of the universe would degrade the subject, and yet we are forced to contemplate it under something of this aspect, because we have no higher and more suitable image, in which to embody our conceptions. The trial is about to commence. It is ushered in with a shout, which startles the ear of nature, and breaks the slumbers of death: the Judge appears, with angels for his retinue, clouds for his robes, and heaven's ethereal concave for his canopy, and bearing the scales of eternal justice as his rule of adjudication. The sun is quenched in his light; the moon retires from his splendour; the stars, like so many sickly tapers, are extinguished by his breath; the earth trembles at his voice, forgets the laws of her constitution, and unable to control the elements of destruction nurtured in her own bosom, again sinks into a chaos. He utters his mandate; the dead obey his call; and, swift as winged spirits, they rise with frames renewed and transfigured, cross the intervening regions of air, and stand marshalled in countless hosts before his dread tribunal. After a process of investigation, which Imagination may dimly conceive, but does not attempt minutely to describe, the irreversible sentence is pronounced. The brief announcement

of that sentence involves an emphasis of meaning, which eternity will be too short to unfold.

And will this soaring faculty venture further into the scenes of the invisible world? Yes! provided with the chart of Revelation, and with her eye steadily fixed upon the pole-star of truth, she will leave the shores of time, and launch forth with confidence on the ocean of boundless and unknown duration. From the throne of Judgment, she will accompany either host into the regions of their respective destination: she will descend into the place of torment, and learn to shudder, while she contemplates every form of anguish there exhibited. All that is dreadful in sensitive suffering, produced by the most intolerable of all elements; all that is wretched in the extremity of mental agony and conscious guilt; all that is terrific in the wild affray of passions uncontrolled, exasperated and infuriated into the highest pitch of malignant energy; all that is dreary and appalling in the view of a community of beings prisoned in everlasting darkness, and doomed to never-ending woe, and among whom, the only shadowy semblance of enjoyment which prevails, is that which is derived from mutual oppression, tyranny, and torture: all these forms of indescribable endurance and dismay, Imagination beholds and realizes in vivid perception; and indulged with a commission, which was denied the unhappy Dives, she warns thoughtless mortals, in terms of solemn expostulation, lest they should be consigned to that place of torment.

But, from that scene of guilt and woe, Imagination hastens to escape; it is only necessity, awful



necessity, that ever obliges her to visit that gloomy abode, and, as it were, to soil her wing with its smoke. When that needful task is accomplished, she prepares for a more pleasing excursion, and essays a nobler flight. She softens and arranges her plumage, and her wings become as those of a dove, "that is covered with silver wings, and her feathers like gold." She soars upward, and takes her place among that innumerable multitude, which are triumphantly retiring from the tribunal, at which, through the efficacy of the blood of the Lamb, they have been acquitted and pronounced blessed. She beholds the emblems of peace, and happiness, and glory, with which they appear, with emotions of exquisite delight; their robes of white, their garlands of victory, their crowns of honour, their harps of gold. She becomes absolutely enraptured and overwhelmed with the contemplation of their enjoyment; its *scene* a paradise, supplying appropriate objects for every constitutional inlet of fruition—beauty to the eye, melody to the ear, all that is sweet and pleasant to the taste: its *character*, transcending indeed all that Imagination can conceive; but known to include all that is great and noble and exalting, all that is agreeable in the exercise of every mental faculty, all that is tender and refined in affection, all that is sublime and elevated in intellectual gratification, all that is transforming and assimilating in the immediate vision of the supreme and uncreated Good: its *society*, bright and pure essences, ascending by a scale of gradation from the order of human spirits; which, perhaps, constitute the lowest in power, in intelligence and love,

to the loftiest cherub or seraph, whose faculties expand most widely, and whose affections glow most intensely in that sphere of being, which approaches nearest to the throne of God: the highest without pride; the meanest without envy, differing in their respective quantities of joy, but each filled to the utmost limits of his capacity; all combining together into one glorious fraternity, cemented by the strongest ties of benevolence and good-will, and infinitely augmenting the general sum of fruition, by mutual union, participation, and reflection. Heaven, in short, as it appears to the eye of Imagination, may be aptly described in the language of one most eminently endowed with that faculty, as a place "where eternity is the measure, felicity is the state, angels are the companions, the Lamb is the light, and God is the portion and inheritance\*."

If such be the power of Imagination, in embodying what is subtle and abstract, and realizing what is distant and unseen, we cannot be surprised at the striking effects which the vigorous use of it, especially in public addresses, and sometimes in a measure bordering upon extravagance, has in all ages produced. Imagination is, in fact, the instrument of power, by which the orator has always electrified and enchanted, alarmed and soothed, has fixed and led captive, at his pleasure, the audience which was hanging on his lips. It was Imagination that thundered with resistless energy in the illustrious declaimers of Greece and Rome; in many of the cele-

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\* Jeremy Taylor.

brated Fathers of the Christian Church; in the renowned preachers of France; and in the departed senators, advocates, and pulpit-orators, that vindicate the genius and character of the British name. And it is sanctified Imagination which still rouses the lethargic powers of our population to domestic activity and missionary enterprise, through the various divisions of the empire.

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## PART II.

THE EVILS OF AN ILL-REGULATED USE OF  
IMAGINATION.

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SECTION I.

## EXTRAVAGANT IDEAS OF INDIVIDUAL DESTINY.

BUT powerful as this engine is in the accomplishment of good, when skilfully and legitimately employed, it is capable, like all other instruments of a similar nature, of being converted to a bad use, and of working much evil. It is now time, therefore, that we institute a brief inquiry into the *Dangers and Abuses*, with which the exercises of imagination are liable to be attended. Only we would here just remark, that the possibility of perverting a faculty or acquirement to a mischievous purpose, neither derogates from its value, nor impedes its just use.

We may say of the Imagination, that, as connected with the various departments of divine truth, it may be made subservient to the noblest purposes, or be productive of the most lamentable consequences, as it is duly directed and regulated, or left to range abroad lawless and uncontrolled. The richest soil, if left uncultivated and neglected, will produce the most luxuriant crop of weeds; the most generous spirits, if unacquainted with wholesome discipline, are in danger of running into the greatest

excesses. But, let the one experience the timely and judicious care of the husbandman, and the other be trained up in the habits of morality and religion, and they will both be the most excellent of their kind. Thus Imagination, abandoned to itself, will inevitably lead to error, superstition, and weakness: but guided by judgment, and controlled by discretion, it will afford most essential aid in the illustration and enforcement of divine truth. Imagination, combined with the reasoning power, is valuable and important; but without that accompaniment, isolated from that guardian faculty, will unquestionably do much more harm than good.

In illustration of these remarks we may observe, that, under the unrestrained influence of imagination operating upon a mind ill trained, or peculiarly constituted, and taking advantage of an extraordinary conjuncture of circumstances, persons have been frequently led to entertain extravagant notions of *their own individual destiny*. We are inclined to think that many of the most absurd impostures, and some of the wildest excesses of fanaticism, with which the Christian world has been deluded or desolated, may be originally traced to this source. The known and acknowledged fact, that in the order of divine government individuals have been specially delegated of heaven, and employed in the accomplishment of extraordinary changes and revolutions in the religious and political world, renders it a possible, and perhaps not improbable case, that persons similarly endowed, and furnished with supernatural means for the achievement of some great

and beneficent designs, will be raised up to the latest period in the history of the world. Considerations of this kind coming in contact with the elements of ambition in a mind naturally inclined to the romantic, have, doubtless, frequently laid there a deposit of combustible materials, which required only a concurrence of circumstances to burst forth in an eruptive explosion of heresy and fanaticism. Deeds of heroic enterprise never act so strongly as when they are contemplated as embodied in the character of an individual renowned in the annals of historical record. Never does an imaginative mind rise and expand with such heat of intellectual fermentation, as when its attention is riveted and absorbed by some colossal figure of venerable antiquity, swelling before it into dimensions more than human. When such a view of greatness or goodness is associated with characters and transactions recorded in the sacred page, it becomes invested with congenial sanctity, and there is a conscious satisfaction felt, in the faintest analogy discoverable, or in the remotest approximation supposed to be made, while such examples and events are under survey. Where there is a sufficient ballast of sound principle to prevent these floating ideas from completely destroying the stability and equipoise of the mind, and where they are properly directed and controlled by the unerring helm of Reason, these active and elevating contemplations are eminently calculated to produce greatness, and force, and energy of character. Heroes in war, patriots in politics, and apostles and saints in reli-



gion, owe a great part of their excellency and pre-eminency to such exercises.

But where this antagonist and overruling influence is wanting; where Imagination greatly preponderates over the more sober and deliberating faculty of the soul, the review and intense admiration of such instances of rare qualification and destiny, may give occasion to notions and ideas in the highest degree chimerical, dangerous, and absurd. Imagination is naturally inventive, and proverbially fond of analogy and combination. The man, therefore, in whose views and feelings it is allowed to predominate, is exceedingly liable to be imposed upon by its plausible and delusive representations. Such is his susceptibility of impression, and such is the assimilating energy of the plastic power by which he is swayed, that he soon discovers in himself an almost perfect reflection of the character whom he admires. In the world of science this extravagance of conception has produced a succession of speculations and theorizing philosophists. In the department of common life it has given rise to wild and romantic sentimentalists. In affairs of state, it has drawn forth, in different ages and countries of the world, a host of political empirics, of reformers and innovators upon a large scale, professing to be restorers and conservators of the public welfare; but, if successful in their attempts, proving for the most part traitors to their country, disturbers of its tranquillity, and destroyers of a large portion of that happiness and prosperity which it previously enjoyed. In the still

more fertile field of theology and religion, it has sown the seed and cherished the growth of a plentiful crop of visionaries, false prophets, and heresiarchs. Let it not be supposed from these remarks, that we wish to condemn every thing that is novel, grand, and strikingly original in character; every thing that is magnificent in design, vivid in anticipation, and energetic in action in any one of the departments, to which reference has been just made. In early youth, when the mind is at its highest point of effervescence,—at that period of life when early genius is just moulting its feathers, and preparing to soar upward, a measure of this species of enthusiasm is not unnatural, is generally, indeed, considered a happy indication, and, if checked with reasonable and proper correctives, seldom proves injurious in the result. We are, moreover, persuaded, that some of the most extravagant schemers and projectors in the economy of state, of the most eccentric in life, and of the most heretical and absurd among the professed reformers and innovators in religion, have been persons of integrity and benevolence; and that their errors, however mischievous in their effects, originated less in obliquity of heart, than in confused impressions of the Imagination. Many individuals there have been providentially raised, in whom something like a prophetic anticipation of their own fated appointment for the performance of great things, and the introduction of great changes, has been abundantly justified and verified by the result. Thus Bacon rose in the sphere of intellect, and in him it can hardly be regarded as extravagance, when, under

the influence of a conscious feeling, that he was to fix a new era in the history of science and philosophy, he exclaimed, "*Viam aut inveniam aut faciam;*" and when apparently actuated by the same emotion, he closed a part of his works with the significant enunciation, "*Sic cogitavit Franciscus Baconus!*"

The same remark may be applied to Milton, when, in a juvenile copy of verses addressed to his father, he gave utterance to the oracular intimation, that he would one day produce a work which would throw lustre over his age and country. In the sacred history we find a multitude of instances in which individuals had intimations from heaven, that they were immediately destined to fill peculiar stations and offices, or to accomplish extraordinary ends. Thus, Moses was designed to be the instrument of deliverance to the Israelites out of the captivity of Egypt. Thus, David was called to the sovereignty of the same people. Thus, Jeremiah was set apart to the prophetic office at one of the most critical and calamitous periods in the history of the Jewish nation. And thus, in a special manner, was Paul chosen, and supernaturally fitted to proclaim the tidings of the Gospel salvation throughout the whole extent of the Roman world. And who can doubt that Luther had the persuasion strongly impressed upon his mind, that he was distinctly marked out in the councils of heaven, and sent into the world for the express purpose of unfolding the mystery of that iniquity, which had thrown a covering of darkness over the

whole region of truth, and held abject and enthralled the powers of the human spirit in the chains of a portentous superstition?

But for a few individuals appearing, sometimes after a succession of ages and centuries, peculiarly destined and transcendently endowed, thousands have been led to fancy themselves such. In the majority of instances, indeed, the workings of this fantastic notion have been confined to the individual's own breast; kept in, like fixed air, within an inclosure, which they had not force to break through: or, if the effervescence, which they created, found a vent, their elements soon evaporated, and their ebullitions sunk down into the stillness of a quiet stagnation. But, where circumstances have been peculiarly favourable to the formation, indulgence, and subsequent operations of such an illusion; where all around was involved in comparative ignorance, and tottering with imbecility; and where there was a well-grounded confidence of superior knowledge and energy; it has been productive of great, and sometimes disastrous effects, and risen to its highest pitch of phrenzy. In such cases, it has been found exceedingly difficult to form a fair and discriminating estimate of character, to sift the heterogeneous mass, and to analyze the different elements of which it was composed. In this department of the interpretation of nature, we can but very partially apply the principles of the experimental philosophy, inasmuch as our materials are too subtle and recondite to bear the process of a palpable observation.

We are, therefore, obliged to have recourse to the general views of analogy and reflection. When persons are under the influence of a strong impression,<sup>\*</sup> that they have been delegated of Heaven to rectify crying abuses in the church or state, or to communicate truths which have been hitherto unknown in the world, or merely to effect, by immediate assistance from above, what no one else is capable of doing, or has been appointed to accomplish; when, to other eyes, the object, if laudable, appears to be pursued by wrong means, or perhaps is altogether futile, or sometimes even dangerous and mischievous in the extreme; it is by no means easy, at all times, to determine what part of the illusion is to be ascribed to aberration of intellect, what to sincerity and piety of purpose, and what to absolute knavery and ambition. There can be no doubt, however, that the whole frequently originates in the unlimited and uncontrolled indulgence of the reveries of Imagination.

The direction, which the current of enthusiastic feeling takes, will generally be regulated by the character and condition of the individual, and, more than all, by the circumstances of the times. The ecclesiastic, especially if the church be in an unsettled state, or sunk into torpid indifference, torn with factions, or overrun with error, will most probably lay claim to inspiration, or, at least, to such aids and illuminations from Heaven as are equivalent to it. He will assume the self-constituted character of a prophet; and sometimes, by

a dexterous conformity with popular habits and prejudices, but more frequently by extraordinary austerities, sometimes by the glowing representations of his captivating eloquence, and sometimes by the mysterious terror of his oracular denunciations, will attach a multitude to his standard. Brooding for a while, perhaps, over the defects and corruptions of the church, which unhappily, in all ages, have too much abounded, and perceiving that the state of things called for a zealous reformer, or, at least, afforded a fair opportunity for a bold and adventurous pretender to put in his claims, he begins with caution and dubious hesitancy, like a wary assailant approaching an enemy's camp under the covert of the night; until, growing confident by success, he lifts up the banner of his profession, and announces that there is a prophet in Israel. In the first centuries of the Christian era, characters of this description, greatly varying from each other indeed, were not uncommon. The most noted, perhaps, was Montanus, with his female associates, by whose plausible pretensions and rigorous ascetic principles, the virtuous and eloquent, but sour and stern-minded Tertullian was for a while held in thrall. One of the most remarkable and highly endowed in modern times, perhaps, was the renowned Baron Swedenborg, who, by a new and cabalistic method of scriptural interpretation, has established a system of theological mysticism and delusion as unfounded and chimerical, in many respects, as the Pythagorean metempsychosis, or the dreams of fabulous romance



recorded in the Shasters of Indostan; and yet it can hardly be doubted, that this singular and benevolent man was, on the whole, actuated by sincere motives, and that he really believed himself, in his moments of most rapturous elevation, to be the subject of visions and revelations from Heaven, which he was bound to communicate for the benefit and instruction of mankind. How great and lamentable, therefore, must have been the aberration and illusion of that mind, which had once proved itself so capable of penetrating into the secrets of nature, and of investigating the laws of the sublimest of human sciences. When we contemplate a character of this order, we fancy ourselves transported into the vicinity of the pole; a region of mind, completely deserted by the steady light of the luminary of Reason, and only blazing at intervals with the flashes and fantastic coruscations of the *Aurora Borealis*; and we regard him with no less pity and compassion than the philosopher in *Rasselas*, who had seriously persuaded himself that the regulation of the celestial bodies had been confided to his care.

We know not whether we should rank in the same class the fifth monarchy-men in Cromwell's time; for these, however deluded and extravagant in their notions, seem in general rather to have expected a new order of things by the immediate interposition and appearance of Christ, than that they themselves were to be individually the authors of that change. Among those who laboured under this illusion of the imagination, at this factious and turbulent period, no

one indeed seems to have been more confident of a commission from Heaven, and to have carried its supposed duties and privileges to a greater extent, than the Protector himself. Invested with the unlimited powers of a plenipotentiary from the court of Heaven, he thought himself justified to depose, to subvert, and to exterminate whatever stood in the way of what, at least during the earlier period of his insurrectionary career, he appears to have sincerely considered a pious and praiseworthy work. That this remarkable individual was an instrument in the hands of God, for the performance of some good, and, in conjunction with his rebellious associates, was suffered to run into some of the most odious and guilty excesses of public crime, including in the black catalogue of his offences, sacrilege, regicide, and usurpation, is unquestionable. But when the exemplary character maintained by him in private life is recollected; when the moral and religious discipline so rigidly enforced upon, and so generally observed by his army, even amidst the most frantic ebullitions of republican zeal, are taken into consideration; a candid estimate of his conduct would lead us, perhaps, rather to regard him as a victim of fanaticism and exasperated enthusiasm, than the cold, deliberate, and murderous insurgent;—as the dupe of his own inflamed imagination, than the proud and ambitious perpetrator of deeds of violence and blood. Very different in many points, but still as symbolizing in many leading features of character and pursuit with the Head of the Protectorate, and his famed compatriots, we may rank the first promoter and many

subsequent leaders of the Crusades. Grievances there were to be redressed; evils there were, which required correction, undoubtedly, in both cases; but evidently, in the former, of a much lighter order, and admitting of a much easier remedy: but the means adopted in both, being of a similar nature, were unjustifiable, and ended in scenes of inexpressible cruelty and disaster. The age, in which the wars of the Cross were first preached and undertaken, was proverbially an age of chivalry, and sentiment, and imagination. Reason was trammelled by the mechanism of subtle dialecticians; philosophy was debased into the noisy logomachy of the schools, and corrupted by the sophistry of cloistered monks; and sound piety was buried under an enormous mass of ignorance and superstition. Thus the great controlling and regulating faculty of the human mind lay dormant. Fancy and feeling were left unguarded, and the population of Europe formed a mass of combustible elements, which required only the application of the kindling material, and the collision of congenial principles, to blaze forth with the portentous glare of the torch of holy war. And there is little doubt that the leader of the motley multitude, which met on the plains of Clermont, exclaiming with ecstasie rapture, "The cause of God!" regarded himself with as much confident sincerity delegated to lead the armies of the Lord of Hosts, as the prophet of Mecca, with blasphemous imposture, proclaimed himself commander of the faithful.

We cannot help adding to these examples of a perverted and deluded imagination, the celebrated

Maid of Orleans; and a late sibyl of our own country, who, not possessed of a genius for war, like the former, assumed to herself the character of the destined mother of Him, who is Prince of Peace. If this female impostor had not succeeded in palming her impious pretensions upon a large number of individuals, some of them of high respectability and attainments, and if she had not appeared to be really a subject of delusion herself, we should have thought her utterly unworthy of regard, and of a place in this enumeration of instances. But as all phenomena, those even of a more insignificant order, deserve the attention of him who would illustrate principles, and trace effects to their causes, the profane ravings of Johanna Southcote are unquestionably entitled to attention. In the recollection of his earlier history—his devoted labours, and his noble bearing, it is melancholy to be obliged to rank the late Edward Irving, in his later years, among the most infatuated of the victims of a heated and ill-regulated Imagination.

But not only impostors, false prophets, and rank enthusiasts, whether ecclesiastical or military, have been led astray by the meteoric illusions of an ill-governed and inflated Imagination; but even some of those, whose sentiments and views of doctrine may generally be regarded as scriptural and orthodox, have occasionally indulged notions, and employed expressions, which, at the least, if personally applied, and literally understood, would render them too obnoxious to the charge. That the two renowned founders of modern methodism, properly so called,

greatly as they differed in many not unimportant questions of faith, in the earlier stages of their progress carried their ideas of personal destiny and authority, and spiritual illumination and assistance, to an unwarrantable and extravagant height, is acknowledged by themselves in their maturer days, and after the effervescence of juvenile zeal and glowing anticipation had somewhat subsided, and allowed them time and opportunity for more deliberate reflection. That these two remarkable and highly endowed individuals, together with some of their more eminent associates, were employed of Heaven for the accomplishment of a great, important, and very necessary work, at that particular period; in rousing the dormant energies of the Christian world; in stirring up to wholesome fermentation those waters of the sanctuary, which had now sunk into so general a stagnation, and gathered so gross a sediment; and in brushing away, though with rough and careless hands, those ashes, which, as a deep stratum, were now so widely deposited over the once pure and glowing altar of the church, no man of piety and candour, we conceive, will, for a moment, be disposed to deny. In this view of the matter we cannot but consider that the Church of England, notwithstanding the effective warfare which they carried on against some of her principles, as an ecclesiastical constitution, as infinitely indebted to their labours. Still professing to be her friends, and to act in a manner which might be construed into hostility only from necessity, they did homage to her essential excellency, to the purity of her doctrinal articles, and to the veneration due to

her apostolic character. But while all this is to be freely acknowledged in their behalf, it must, at the same time, be maintained, that, in their public addresses, and in their private memorials, they allowed themselves the use of expressions which involved assumptions, and indicated an estimate of character, far from consistent with that humility, that moderation, that sobriety, which are necessary, not only to preserve the equipoise of the mind of the ordinary Christian, but also to repress the extravagances of apostolical and high-sounding pretension.

But, this disposition to indulge ideas of something peculiar and divinely authoritative, connected with their own destination, has been by no means confined to those few characters, who have become notorious in the history of the religious or political world; but it has manifested itself with more or less prominence in most of those, who, by some remarkable conjecture of circumstances, united with superior energy of talent, or, even by means of very moderate abilities, raised beyond their level by a temporary and factitious interest, have suddenly emerged from obscurity, and gained a position, which gave them a considerable command over the public mind. Some few, indeed, having, by patience and laborious perseverance and transcendent merit acquired this ascendancy, have nobly and unfeignedly taken advantage of it to advance the cause of piety and truth: but, generally, the pinnacle of eminence in the temple of religion has proved dangerous. The Imagination, looking downward from its lofty height, has become vertiginous; and when the mind has been



thoroughly saturated with the atmosphere of that elevated region, it is not long before the mouth begins to thunder out in peals of indignant rebuke against the men of this generation ; and the individual, if truly worthy and excellent, under the influence of a feeling of self-confident sincerity, believes that he has been specially deputed of heaven to correct the errors, and to remodel the principles of his age, with nearly as much certainty as he credits the most fundamental truths of the Gospel, which, perhaps, he may be commissioned to preach. Let it not be supposed that we are reflecting upon the boldness and fidelity of the Christian ambassador. In so doing, we should be condemning the very quality which, at the least, is as commendable as any other in his character, and which the circumstances of human nature in general render the most essential and important of all others. An occasional and well-timed severity of reproof, an unqualified enunciation of truth, even in its most awful and alarming character, is not only authorized, but imperatively demanded of him who bears the credentials of the skies, and has to conduct, as it were, a solemn negotiation between heaven and earth, on questions which involve the fate of eternity. Our remarks are intended only to carry reprehension unto those, who, intoxicated with inflated notions of their own imagined destiny, pour out the redundancy of their swollen conceptions sometimes in the anathemas of universal condemnation, and sometimes in the rhapsody of presumptuous conceit. To give an individual instance, with a full and cordial recognition of all that was really excellent

and praiseworthy in his character, and without presuming to decide on his state before God, and his everlasting doom, such, in our estimation, was Huntington, or, as he was accustomed, with a mixture of pride and affected humility, to denominate himself, from his former occupation, the *coal-heaver*, who declared and ordered it to be inscribed upon his tomb, that, in due time, the inhabitants of England should know that there had been "a prophet" among them.

On this part of the subject we have only to subjoin the cautionary remark, that all are not to be regarded as running into the excesses here reprobated, or as guilty of the offence here condemned, whom the world frequently charges with such fanaticism. It is impossible not to be aware, and not deeply to lament, that an indiscriminate allegation of this nature is not unusually preferred against men at once enlightened in their views, calm and deliberate in judgment, and uniformly regular throughout the whole sphere of their practice, and remarkable only for their zealous, active, and unremitting efforts, in the best and most arduous of causes. Enthusiasm of feeling, controlled and directed by profoundness of intellect, by simplicity and sincerity, by prudence and discretion of mind, and steadily flowing forth through the channels of piety and obedience, we consider as the perfection of the Christian character. Every thing which designedly and uniformly falls short of this point, or runs extravagantly beyond it, is either stagnant and putrescent, or turbulently pernicious and unwholesome.

## SECTION II.

AN EXTRAVAGANT ESTIMATE OF MEANS AS RELATED TO THE  
PROPOSED END.

ANOTHER evil, which has sometimes resulted from a preponderance and unlimited indulgence of *Imagination* in matters of religion, is an *extravagant Estimate of Means*, as directed to the accomplishment of a proposed end. When a man of warm temperament, and active, energetic, and projecting mind, has fixed his attention upon an object of transcendent magnitude and importance, he is apt to forget all that is difficult and arduous in the prosecution of it: fancy throws her illusive colouring over the whole scene; and, by a species of optical deception, reduces mountains into mole-hills, and contracts a space of almost immeasurable longitude into a point of approximation bordering upon contact. To the man of imagination difficulties are seldom visible, and facilities are rarely wanting. He can annihilate and create at pleasure. The regular development of causes and effects is a process too slow and too tedious to keep pace with the rapid evolutions of his mind. With strides of imperceptible rapidity he crosses the intervening distance, and grasps his object before he has yet fairly arranged the method of pursuing it. All resisting media are decomposed and melted away by the electric influence of the magic power by which he is swayed; and all surrounding elements become tributary to the grand result upon which he calculates. The process

of successful enterprise with him is "veni, vidi, vici." In his cooler and more deliberate moments, and when the record of experience unveils its annals to his view, he may, indeed, be sensible of the inadequacy of the means, if left to their own unaided operation; but then he is confident that a divine power will accompany them and render them effectual. With inimitable tact and skill he will seize every fact, and every promise contained in the volume of inspiration, and without inquiring very accurately into his ground and warrant of present application, without very carefully examining into the analogy, or the conditions and relative bearings of the promises, he considers them all as subsidiary to his views, and as positive pledges of the success of his schemes.

To produce the full and genuine effect of religion upon the human character, either among those to whom its theory is already known, and by whom its forms are already observed, or by disseminating its truths among those who have been hitherto unacquainted with its principles, is evidently a task which surpasses the power of all subordinate agency. But it is equally certain that Jehovah has frequently exerted his omnipotent energy in the accomplishment of this end, through the instrumentality of such an agency, on a scale of immense magnitude and importance. It is also true that he has made a variety of promises, by which, under definite circumstances, and limited by specified requirements, he is pledged to bless the well-directed labours of his servants, and to co-operate with their endeavours. But all his engagements and designs form a part of a stupendous

and regularly organized plan of government and proceeding,—a plan, which we can but very partially appreciate, and can never wholly comprehend. We are, therefore, in great danger of thwarting or outrunning the purposes which gradually and infallibly unfold themselves in the progressive operations of this infinite scheme, when we venture to predict, or too confidently to anticipate, what will be its course, and to assign some determinate proportion of its power to the accomplishment of a particular object. Not that we are to sit listless and quiescent, and let the divine purposes in their own way, and in their appointed time, work their own effect. This is as much beneath our duty, as the former conduct is unwarrantable and supernumerary to our duty. Our obligations to labour and activity are clearly defined:—Whether we shall exert ourselves or not in the cause of religion and truth has not been left to our discretion. But, what precise measure of success may attend our efforts, and in what instances we are authorized with confidence to expect the accompanying energies of divine grace, has been by no means decided, but has been left to be determined by principles of expediency, as perceived and established by the infinite wisdom of Heaven. Though the effective influences of the Holy Spirit appear to us frequently arbitrary, and can be regulated by no settled laws of human calculation, yet, in their communication, there is undoubtedly a *general* correspondency observed between the aptitude of the means, and the end proposed to be attained; and the anticipations of success ought, for

the most, to be limited by this circumstance. In some extraordinary cases, indeed, this rule would seem to have been completely reversed, and phenomena have often presented themselves in the moral and spiritual world, which appeared explicable upon no other principle, and accountable from no other cause, than the assumption of a more marked exertion and co-operation of Jehovah's power than is observable in the ordinary range of his proceedings. Forgetting the general method of His administration, and taking their standard of judgment from His special and occasional interpositions, men have frequently allowed themselves to form the most chimerical and unfounded expectations, and, upon the failure of their projects, like the companions of Raleigh in his expedition to the land of gold, have sunk into the apathy of disappointment, or risen to the mutiny of discontent. These sanguine calculators are all energy and alacrity, while their vision is bodied forth in its full proportions, and glows with the rainbow tints of fancy and hope; but when it has melted into thin air, and vanished at the criterion touch of time and experience, they are like the traveller, whose steps for a while were guided, and whose path was illuminated by the light of a false fire, but on the extinction of its illusive glare, he finds himself benighted, bewildered, and lost. The sanguine author, the sanguine preacher, the sanguine employer of his own or of others' labours, are all so many examples of the deceptive and pernicious influence which a warm and undisciplined Imagination is capable of exerting upon minds not duly upon their



guard against its vagaries. These remarks are not intended to check that sprightly vigour of faculty, that generous ardour of zeal, that noble enthusiasm of activity, which characterizes the youthful aspirant after usefulness on a great and extensive scale. We know of no lovelier sight, of no finer specimen of the combination of the power of grace with that of nature, than is exhibited in that concentration of the faculties and uniform direction of the physical energies in the prosecution of a great, sacred, and glorious object, which we have sometimes an opportunity of witnessing. Silent be the tongue, paralyzed be the hand, that would stagger the resolutions, chill the heaven-born aspirations, and impede the beneficent career of the evangelical or Christian hero. We would only have him contract his sphere of vision, that he may see more clearly, and trace more steadily the path which is set before him. We would only trim, and in due measure supply the lamp, which we have no wish to extinguish. We would only have all legitimate means employed for the advancement of religion and truth, but with a sense of their own inadequacy, with expectations chastised and regulated by a proper regard to that measure of success, which the ordinary supplies of divine aid are calculated to afford, so as to avoid the sting of disappointment, and the shame of extravagant calculations.

In illustration of this part of our subject little more need be said. Observation and experience must have supplied sufficient opportunities for the development and contemplation of an evil, of which

every individual must, perhaps, be conscious of having, in a degree, more or less, afforded an example. To estimate means, intellectual and spiritual, somewhat above their real importance, in the earlier stages of character, is an error hardly separable from the nature of man.

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### SECTION III.

#### INJURIOUS IRREGULARITIES AND ALTERNATIONS OF FEELING ARISING FROM AN ILL-GOVERNED IMAGINATION.

WE proceed to observe, as *another evil* frequently associated with a preponderance and unlimited indulgence of Imagination in matters of religion, that it is in danger of producing or of fostering feelings of *morbid melancholy*, gloomy apprehension, and dark despair, on the one hand; or of *levity, eccentricity*, and of fantastic and ill-judged *humour*, on the other. It may appear strange, that we specify, as liable to spring from the same general cause, qualities so different, and apparently so opposed to each other. But, on further consideration, we are persuaded that the very same faculty, in its multiform exercises and operations, according to the circumstantial and incidental influence to which it is subject, and the order of mental and physical qualities with which it is combined, is abundantly capable of producing all these varieties and modifications of effect. The religious principle, above all others, perhaps, requires a due equipoise of the mind, and

to be diffused, in suitable proportions, over the whole substratum of the character, in order that it may develope itself in those forms of moral symmetry and beauty, which are equally remote from what is frigid, tame, and insipid, and from what is wild, irregular, and excessive. This inevitably results from the nature of the thing. Such is the transcendent importance of religion, that it is sufficient to turn the balance to a dangerous excess, whenever it is disproportionately collocated and injudiciously arranged in the extensive receptacle of the human mind. Such is the vast momentum which it commands, that if, through some unhappy influence or defect, it takes a wrong direction, it is capable of carrying the faculty, in which it has exorbitantly lodged, like a planet thrown out of the range of its attraction, into the most perilous excursions and aberrations. If this faculty be that of Reason, religion, in that case, will be cold, and stiff, and stagnant; full of nice distinctions, and abounding, perhaps, with noisy logomachies and contentions; but without warmth, without vigour, without zeal. If it be that of Feeling, the consequence will be a religion of strong and indefinite emotions, of heat without light, of sensations without principles, of desires, and hopes, and fears; of which the owner is neither able nor disposed, and is, perhaps, surprised to find that any one should expect of him, with meekness to give a reason. If it be that of the Imagination, the result will be a fluctuating instability of character; the tones of the mind, like notes of irregular music, now rising

too high, and now sinking as much too low; now pouring forth in strains of deep and plaintive melody, and now

Light turns of music, broken and uneven,  
Carry the soul upon a jig to heaven.

On the stage of a mind thus constituted and thus influenced, the scenes will be continually shifting. One while the dark and sombre view of things will present itself; but soon, unless prevented by physical or other causes, the more bright and brilliant will succeed. The unresting activity, the elastic vigour, the mercurial versatility of the predominantly imaginative mind, can seldom long endure a stationary position, and a uniformity of moral colouring. To answer the exorbitant demands, to meet the craving exigencies of such a mind, there must be a continual range of speculation, an endless diversity of scenery. And, spurred on by its own inherent impetuosity in quest of novelties, it will sometimes plunge into darkest caverns, and involve itself in lurid gloom. After struggling for a while with forms of horror and despair of its own creation, it will escape and rise into empyrean light, and exult in its recovered joy, and peace, and freedom, with undue and unbecoming sportiveness. Imagination, by the peculiar property which it possesses of realizing, combining, embodying, and of tinging with a stronger hue—a hue of darker shade, or of more brilliant colouring—every scene which it contemplates, changes fear into consternation, and despondency into black despair; or transforms composure into levity, and cheerfulness into unseemly gaiety and

mirth; and the mind finds itself, almost incessantly, either overwhelmed with the ideas of the awful and terrific; or amused and titillated with turns of the humorous, and combinations of the ludicrous. Hence it is, that persons of this character and habit frequently exhibit great changes of feeling and conduct, from apparently very trifling causes. Occurrences of the most immaterial importance occasion perturbations and transitions in their mind, too rapid and instantaneous for others to perceive, except in their fanciful or objectionable effects. They will sometimes seize upon a point of doctrine, true in itself, which they either imperfectly understand, or are obstinately determined to contemplate under a false and distorted aspect; and, without any conceivable ground or reason, will apply it to themselves in such a manner as can only have the effect of plunging them into inexpressible agony and dismay. The uncertainty and obscurity which hang around all moral speculations and prospective views, when not illuminated by the clear beams of faith in a divine revelation, throw a sublime and awful horror over the sphere of their contemplations. They become dizzy in looking down upon a gulf, the depths of which they cannot fathom. At other times, the case will be, in almost every respect, the reverse. Imagination, like the illustrious Bard of Paradise, ascending from the dismal darkness of the nether world, where she had for a while been sojourning, will regain the regions of light, and wanton in the cheering warmth of the bright sun of divine revelation, unfolding her glossy pinions to the splen-

dour of its effulgent beams. This is the season of an opposite danger—that of a levity, and a species of jesting bordering upon profaneness, in the treatment of sacred truth, whether in ordinary converse, in epistolary communication, or in the public discussions of the sanctuary. Here Imagination, abandoning her former and generally more congenial character of lone and pensive melancholy, assumes the form and attitude of fancy, proverbially light in her air, and frequently grotesque in her motions. That play of intellect, that rapid and intermingling flow of ideas, associated by relations of various kinds, usually and specifically denominated *Fancy*, is, for the most part, attended with the external manifestation of the quality of wit: and though we would not have wit altogether banished from the province of religion, yet she is assuredly never to be admitted into that hallowed region, but in her more sober livery, in her native simplicity, and employing a dialect suitably regulated and chastised. She must remember that she treads on holy ground. Guided by wisdom and discretion, she may indeed throw “a sprightly beam” over the face of truth, and exhibit its beauty in a lovelier and more engaging form; but her merry turns, and her tricks of buffoonery, are to be checked and totally excluded; and (to use the language of one of the purest and brightest of her sons) would be as unbecoming amidst the solemnities of the sanctuary, as if Harlequin should intrude into the gloomy chamber, where a corpse was lying in state.

The main end of preaching—that end to which all other means are to be regarded as subsidiary and



subservient, is, we apprehend, to produce a habit of deep and serious reflection. This appears indispensably necessary to prepare the mind for those influences and impressions, which it is the design of religion to impart, and which, in a great measure, constitute its ultimate effect. Whatever, therefore, is inconsistent, or militates with this object; whatever has a tendency to dissipate the thoughts, to abstract the ideas and feelings from their firm and vigorous concentration, in attending to the "one thing needful;" whatever is calculated to divest the realities of an eternal world of their solemnity and transcendent importance, by associating them with ideas of levity or contempt, must obviously be incompatible with the legitimate purposes of Christian instruction, and, therefore, cannot be otherwise regarded than as an outrage upon the sacredness of its character. The most grievous offenders in this department, among writers of respectability and eminence, are perhaps Swift and South; the former, more particularly, in a work professedly on religion, of which a pious and learned divine of our church, the late celebrated William Jones, truly asserted, that no man can read it without being the worse for it; and the latter, almost throughout his numerous and occasionally striking sermons. The Dean of St. Patrick appears to have been a most remarkable instance of that sour disdain, that moody melancholy, and that riotous and overbearing wit, which frequently form the ill-sorted and ill-regulated compound of the character of persons under the influence of an imagination inadequately controlled by religious

principle. Wit, and irony, and sarcasm, are weapons which, even in the hands of the most judicious and candid, can seldom be brought to bear with suitable effect upon the subject of religion ; but when wielded by one, who knows not how to restrain his spirit, and repress the sportive volatility of his fancy, they cannot fail deeply to wound the cause, which he undertakes to defend.

The case of the amiable and excellent Cowper must always possess a melancholy interest to those, who would trace the effects of Imagination as connected with religious principle. The character of this extraordinary man, as it was affected by his peculiar views of divine truth, has been variously represented ; but its pre-eminent worth, both intellectual and moral, all have concurred to acknowledge. Some are in the habit of regarding the melancholy aberrations, which clouded with such deep shades of misery the latter years of his life, as altogether owing to his religion ; and conclude, without further examination, that the principles, which could produce such effects, must be unquestionably wrong, and in the highest degree odious and detestable. Others qualify this opinion, by allowing that the elements of darkness and despair were naturally inherent in the mind of Cowper ; but that a system of religion, which required and encouraged excitation and high-wrought feeling, having been superinduced upon that previous tendency, and attached itself to a restless vigour of Imagination, called forth the seeds of mental malady, and was the instrumental cause of most of the wretchedness which he endured. Others

again, including most of Cowper's friends, and of those who embraced the same principles in the main, which he had adopted, thought that his overwhelming depression arose entirely from his physical or mental constitution; from the original organization of his intellectual system; and that his sentiments of religion, so far from aggravating it, were the best, and, apparently, under some circumstances, the only means of alleviating it. With respect to the first of these opinions, it hardly deserves serious notice, because it evidently proceeds upon false principles, and evinces a total ignorance, or a most inconsiderate disregard of known facts. Of the last, we shall only say, that independently of the tendency of that scheme of religion which Cowper is known to have embraced, to produce peace and tranquillity, and sometimes the more elevated feeling of joy in the mind, as ascertained by almost universal experience, it derives great weight and probability from the circumstance, that his first attack, which rendered it necessary that he should be placed under the care of Dr. Cotton, was finally surmounted by a cheering view of divine truth; and that, for a succeeding series of years, he enjoyed a measure of happiness and delightful satisfaction, to which he had before been a perfect stranger.

As to the intermediate view of the character of this great and good man here mentioned, and the influence which his faith and devotional habits are supposed to have had in occasioning his subsequent depression, we conceive that the assumption may have some truth. But let so much be conceded.

Does it follow that the conclusion usually drawn from this assumption is fairly deducible from the premises? Let it be even granted that Cowper's views of religion were the instrumental cause of calling forth the malady from which he suffered so intensely during the latter period of his life: is it to be thereby inferred that these views were wrong? Does it in the slightest degree affect their previous character? Surely nothing can be more preposterous and absurd. Nothing can be a greater outrage upon every principle of reason, and every rule of conduct, than that a system of opinions should be deemed universally false and prejudicial, because the previous tendencies and dispositions of an individual may have rendered him unapt for the reception of its genuine influence, and because, in consequence of that circumstance, it may produce a temporary effect exceedingly painful and melancholy. A general truth, it is obvious, must stand totally independent of the peculiarities of an isolated subject. Were not this the case, what would become of the science of medicine—indeed, of almost the whole theory of human knowledge and practice? In the instance of Cowper himself, it may, with quite as much propriety, be maintained that the profession of the law, and the necessity of discharging official duties, are unsuitable to the human character, and have a necessary tendency to produce aberration of mind, as the profession of religion, and the conscientious discharge of its duties; for it is well known that his first attack of overwhelming and alarming depression was occasioned by the terror of appearing before the House of Lords, for the performance of a

simple duty in the capacity of clerk, while yet a student in the Temple. To conclude against law and its associated duties from this circumstance would be hazarded by few. We affirm it to be equally sophistical and illogical to conclude universally against the religion of Cowper, and the duties which legitimately result from it, even supposing it to have been the instrumental cause of the awful calamity under which he so long laboured. The fact is, his mind was so tender, and so delicately poised, and his Imagination was so morbidly active, so irritably alive, that anything was sufficient to destroy its balance, which would come upon it with an overpowering effect. That religion, with its awful weight of everlasting interests, should have been attended with a temporary effect of this nature, we consider neither wonderful, nor at all derogatory; and we think that his friends have shown an unnecessary and undue degree of sensitiveness, in endeavouring to abstract his view of divine truth from all connexion with his malady, and to resolve it altogether into physical causes. We do not conceive that those peculiarities of the Gospel, which he adopted, would lose a single grain of their credibility, force, and importance, if it were proved that they were the sole cause, of which his diseased Imagination availed itself to plunge him into that state of wretchedness, from which, in this world, he never wholly emerged. His case shows, indeed, the necessity of extreme caution, and of the exercise of much sound wisdom and discretion, in conveying the truths of religion to minds of a delicate temperament, and in directing the subsequent

stages of the character. Where there is a strong tendency to nervous irritability, where the mind is so constituted as to be actuated by a species of elective attraction towards forms of terror and ideas of pensive melancholy bodied forth by the Imagination, as was the case with the sublime and devout Pascal, it is unquestionably the part of prudence to avoid all occasions of undue excitement, and to cultivate those gentle feelings, those serene and unruffled graces of the Spirit, which are best calculated to preserve the balance of the mental faculties, and to advance the soul in holiness. We are acquainted with an instance of a person very early in life possessed of some of the features of character just specified, who, in consequence of having been once so transported by his feelings, while engaged in prayer, as to have his whole mind almost entirely unhinged for the time, for a considerable period subsequent to that circumstance could never kneel down without the most painful and distressing apprehension of the recurrence of the same overwhelming emotions. Cases of this nature, however, form no argument whatever against an order of principles, which stand upon their own independent evidence, and are enforced by their inherent and immutable obligations. Whenever they may be attended with an effect so calamitous and deeply melancholy, as some affirm to have been the fact in the interesting and illustrious bard of Olney, we are to ascribe it to an intellectual organization, which spurned their control, and rendered it morally impossible that they should exert their legitimate influence. For such mournful aber-



rations Imagination, and not Religion, is fairly and properly amenable.

After all that has been said and conceded respecting Cowper, however, and in the full view of the indescribable sufferings which he underwent, we are far from considering his adoption of the peculiar creed, which he had embraced and maintained through life, an unhappy circumstance. Let it be supposed that he should have recovered from his first stroke of mental malady, independently of all views of religion, and returned to a coterie of gay literary associates, with whom he had hitherto lived, and from whose follies and fashionable vices there is no reason to suppose that he either had been, or would be, completely free; is there any person, who has the slightest impression of the value of the human soul, and of the eternal obligations of religion; is there any such person, we would ask, who would now regret, that, at the expense of any measure of temporary suffering, he should have been rescued from his imminent danger; that he should, by that means, have been the instrument of such extensive benefit to mankind; and, so far as human judgment can go, that he should now have reached the secure possession of everlasting glory? Did the devout and amiable sufferer himself regret it the moment he was emancipated from that tabernacle of clay, which for so many years had been his dungeon? Oh! with what transport did his pure and sublime spirit, now freed and unmanacled, emerge from the darkness and gloom of despair, in which he had been so long enveloped and enchained, and soar

upward with waving pinions into regions of eternal day! How little account does he now set upon that brief night of woe, in which it had been his lot to mourn and weep! The very recollection of it, except so far as it may be the means of heightening his joys and kindling his gratitude, is lost amid the enraptured felicities of heaven, and the entrancing visions of the Almighty.

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#### SECTION IV.

##### FANCIFUL AND FORCED INTERPRETATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

IN illustration of the dangerous use to which Imagination is liable to be perverted, as connected with the great and comprehensive subject of religion, we must not omit noticing as a great and palpable evil into which it is apt to lead, that it is frequently guilty of making a *fanciful* and *forced* application of Scripture; of turning *figurative* language into literal, and the reverse; and discovering *resemblances* and *coincidences* which were never intended to be established or expressed. This is a danger of no common magnitude, inasmuch as it has a direct tendency to neutralize the strongest evidences of its truth, supplied in the inherent beauty and consistency of divine revelation; to subvert all rules of sober and legitimate interpretation; and to render the whole scheme of Christianity contemptible in the eyes of men of rational and investigating minds. The Bible, indeed, contains much of what is peculiar, mysterious, and

divinely sublime. There is a correspondence between its respective parts, especially its two grand divisions of Old and New Testament, of a very intimate and distinguishing nature. There is, unquestionably, a general, and, in many points, very striking analogy between the system of doctrines which it proposes, the principles of administration which it develops, and the more remarkable phenomena of the natural world, and the ordinary course of Providence, as unfolded in the records of history, and presented to our daily observation. There can be no doubt, that divine truth is frequently conveyed in the volume of inspiration under the form of allegory; and that practical doctrines, of the most weighty importance, are often exhibited under the transparent imagery of poetical diction; that many circumstances and events there recorded, have a twofold reference, answering the primary purpose of sustaining the present interest of religion in the world, and serving the ultimate end of reflecting anticipatory light upon the transactions of future times. In this mixed character of the records and communications of Scripture, in this union of immediate application and of secondary and ultimate reference, which distinguishes many of its parts, there is a striking display of the infinite wisdom of God, and a remarkable adaptation to the varied situations and faculties of man. Here a variety of ends is served by simplicity of means. From this circumstance, important indeed, if correctly appreciated and duly estimated, many have taken occasion to run into

extravagances of interpretation and allusion, not only at variance with all the recognized principles of philology and criticism, but in some cases even in direct violation of those of piety and sound wisdom. With the telescopic eye of their fancy, they have discovered luminaries of truth scattered over the firmament of revelation, which the eye of Faith, guided and regulated by Reason, never could have perceived. They have found out laws of harmony and mutual dependency subsisting between the various doctrines and dispensations of religion, infinitely more intimate and sublimely refined than those striking and palpable relations, which it were blindness not to observe, and impiety not to acknowledge. But, unhappily, their spheres of doctrinal symmetry and correspondence, like the whirlpools of the French philosopher, and “the cycles and epicycles, orb in orb,” of the Ptolemaic system, will seldom bear the test of sober and enlightened investigation.

Upon this illusive principle of analogy and adaptation, is founded the whole scheme of mystical interpretation, which, in some form or other, has prevailed in every age of the Christian church. From this, carried to its utmost length, and allowed an unlimited range, sprung the monstrous chimeras of dogmatical impiety and absurdity, which harassed and desolated the church during the three first centuries of the evangelical era; the numberless sects and modifications of heresy which are partly described and confuted by Irenæus, the Plerôma of Æons, and the numerical principles of the Valenti-

nians, and other equally revolting and visionary branches of gnostic theology. Most of these professed to derive their leading opinions from Scripture, refined into a sublime and attenuated essence, after its contents had been made to pass through the alembic of their heated fancies. Some of the founders and propagators of these heresies, arrayed the offspring of their imagination in colours of the most glowing eloquence, and by that means, succeeded in giving a plausibility to their notions, and an apparent consistency with the principles of revelation, which, otherwise, they could never have attained. But a wresting of Scripture, to the destruction of all sound views and sentiments of doctrine, was by no means confined to arch-heretics and notorious corrupters of the divine word. A disposition to mysticize upon what is plain and simple and practical, if taken in its literal and obvious acceptation, but containing wonderful sublimities and abstractions, when divested of its allegorical veil, has vitiated some of the finest productions of venerable piety. In these persons, it was, doubtless, an error of judgment, generated, in a great measure, by habits of monastic seclusion, in which the imagination and the heart, mutually combining together, to the almost entire exclusion of solid reason, spun out those theories of explication, of which we have often to admire the piety and ingenuity; but at the same time we have to lament the irrelevant and unauthorized application of the various declarations of Scripture. In the sermons and homilies of the renowned Abbot of Clermont, for example, it is impossible for

a candid and serious mind not to perceive and respect the vein of devotion which pervades them; but it is equally impossible not to observe, with pain, how frequently his fancy, immersed in the humid vapours of superstition, contrives to abandon the literal sense of a passage, and to extract from it a meaning which the inspired writer does not appear to have had in the remotest contemplation. A specimen of this method of interpretation is seen in his second sermon, "*De adventu Domini*," in which the language of Isaiah's prediction, addressed to Ahaz when he had been commanded to ask a sign—a language which Jews and Christians have found it so difficult consistently to explain—is thus applied. Justly taking it for granted that the prophecy refers to the Lord Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, he institutes a comparison between Him and the first Adam, who chose the evil rather than the good. The expressions of butter and honey, as constituting the food of the infant, whom the Virgin should bring forth, oblige him to have recourse to the parable of the lost sheep, which he considers as emblematical of human nature. As the milk of a sheep produces two substances, butter and cheese, the former rich and moist, the latter dry and hard, it was to be characteristic of the Messiah, that he should take to himself only the butter, the goodness and excellency of human nature in its original purity; while he would altogether leave and avoid the evil principles of that nature represented by the other product of the milk. In order to account for the other term, honey, he considers the Messiah as represented by a bee feeding among



lilies. In this character, he describes him as originally dwelling in the flower-bearing country of angels. From thence He flew into Nazareth; but contrary to the practice of bees in general, he came to us without a sting, without the rigour and severity of judgment, and bearing only honey, the sweetness of grace and mercy. He came without the sting of malice and revenge, which was now become inherent in our nature, and united unto himself only the kindness and gentleness of love. Similar expositions and applications abound throughout his writings. The same remark may be made, with some qualification, perhaps, in reference to the eloquent and devout Augustine, especially in his commentary upon the "Mystical Psalms." His "Enarrations" upon these sublime compositions, are often beautifully and devoutly elevated. The mind delights to follow him through those scenes of Elysian joy, and peace, and love, which he unfolds to the view. But the plan of invariably applying the Psalms to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the immediate and designed illustration of the blessings and privileges of the Gospel, involves him in difficulties, which require the continual aid of fancy to discern points of analogy and adaptation, where, otherwise, they are utterly undiscoverable. The most distant resemblance, the remotest possibility of an intended allusion, is to him equivalent to perfect similitude, and amounts almost to identity. His mode of allegorizing the history of Paradise and the fall, in which, among other strange things, he represents the four rivers of Eden as intended to symbolize the four cardinal virtues, is a

singular instance of this plan of interpretation. But the most remarkable and ingenious fancy-piece in the whole of his writings, perhaps, is the numerical calculation appended to the last Psalm, by which he endeavours to account for the number of these divine songs being confined to one hundred and fifty. From this quantity, by various and intricate processes of multiplication, he infers the agreement of the two Testaments and several other points, which appear to him highly important.

In this scheme of scriptural application, the eloquent Bishop of Hippo has been followed at various distances by many subsequent theologians, some of them of great and illustrious name. Among these the learned Horsley, and the amiable and elegant Horne, must unquestionably be regarded as having carried the principle of mystic interpretation to an undue length. Under the cover of the names of these distinguished prelates, many have since come forward, who, to use the words of the former of these writers in the commencement of one of his sermons, we “know not by what alchemy” have extracted an essence of signification from the songs of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, which it can only excite feelings of astonishment that any one can seriously propose as legitimate interpretations of Scripture. According to these notions the songs of Zion chanted to the notes of David’s lyre, and mingling with the swelling tide of the choral symphonies, which ascended from the temple at Jerusalem, are seldom allowed to have any primary meaning, and to have only an occasional and general reference, as they unquestionably have,

to the person and offices of the Messiah and the various blessings of his kingdom. But they were designed almost entirely and exclusively to illustrate and even graphically to describe the scenes which were to be developed under the evangelical dispensation. The region of prophecy partly illuminated with beacons, by which faith might steer its course through a dark and tempestuous current of time, and the divine word might receive its confirmation after the accomplishment of the predicted events, but still covered over with much obscurity to prevent the unwarrantable intrusions and the rash pervagations of bold presumption, has been always a department of revealed knowledge peculiarly attractive to the minds, and not unfrequently fatal to the safety of imaginative adventurers. The Jews, to whom the prophecies were more immediately addressed, have almost universally misapprehended their nature, and by a process of literal and carnal application, to the exclusion of all spiritual import, scornfully rejected, and continue to reject, the Messiah, who was to be the end of the law, and to whom all the prophets gave witness. Thus the literal interpretation of what was obviously intended figuratively and emblematically to represent spiritual blessings of a most exalted order, was the stumbling block upon which the ancient Jews fell: and we fear that a similar misapplication, in reference to a different economy—the economy of millennial glory, has led astray from the path of soberness and truth, in scriptural exposition, many of those who are most anxious and practically zealous in the conversion and restoration of the same interesting

people. What portion may be true of the theories, which, under various modifications, have been carried down from the very first ages of Christianity, and illustrated among the moderns, principally by Mede and others, respecting the second advent of Christ, and the grand line of operations, by which his kingdom shall be universally established upon earth; whether He will, indeed, personally appear and conduct His restored people in one glorious host into Palestine, and there reign over them with unprecedented pomp and triumph, as many suppose, or whether under the gorgeous veil of prophetic imagery is conveyed nothing more than a magnificent display of divine power, in establishing the kingdom of grace upon earth, which seems to be the more general opinion, we cannot positively determine. We would, therefore, by no means condemn the speculative lucubrations of ingenious and learned men upon these interesting topics, if stated with something of that modesty and diffidence, with which Newton proposed his conjectures. We condemn only the dogmatism of a heated imagination, in laying down schemes, which, on account of the obscurity and inadequacy of the premises, must, at the very best, be in many of their details utterly uncertain, and when attempted to be fully developed, are found to involve difficulties and contradictions which must be regarded as principles of evident self-destruction. Amidst these rich and flowery regions of inspiration, Fancy, under the guidance of Reason, may be allowed to range and speculate, but not to pronounce and legislate, until the unquestionable light of facts has dissi-

pated their remaining obscurities. In the mean time they have enough of what is palpable and distinct to embody the visions of faith, to animate the expectations of hope, to kindle the flame of love, and to rouse to higher energy the efforts of practical zeal. There can be no doubt that days of unrivalled glory are before us, that the cycle of ages is rapidly running its round, and that the revolutions of time will soon introduce the period, which will establish a new era of light, and righteousness, and peace.

Until this bright epoch in the history of our fallen world shall commence, however, let us adhere to the plain and simple, and practical exposition of the word of truth, and guard against being imposed upon by the illusive halo, which our own imagination may have thrown around its scenes.

In the application of the parables of our Lord, and in estimating the various typical characters, and the emblematic objects and events mentioned in Scripture, we likewise often perceive a play of fancy, which greatly desecrates the subject, and has a strong tendency to detract from its inherent solemnity. With persons of this disposition nothing is to be taken in its natural sense, and to be confined to its primary intention. They must refine and subtilize upon every thing, until sometimes they have banished all rational meaning, in order to produce the quintessence of their lofty and arbitrary speculation. For every utensil in the extensive and complicated establishment of Solomon's temple, they have an exact correspondent spiritual import. Every laudable feature in the character,

and every important event in the life of the Jewish patriarchs, prophets, and kings, are in some way or other designed to adumbrate the person or offices of the promised Messiah. And instead of considering the parables as consisting partly of fiction, serving the sole purpose of a substratum of the mould, and partly of certain superficial conformations, by which the correct image of truth might be represented, they regard them as the models of recondite principles, even to the minutest specialities and details. Thus the parable, instead of answering the original and subordinate end of illustrating truth, becomes itself the gauge and measure of truth. In the case of a miracle, again, it is not enough that our Lord should have afforded a general confirmation of his Messiahship, and performed an act of beneficence, which evidently surpassed the unaided resources of nature, but there must be a meaning attached to it of a more sublimated order. The twelve baskets of fragments, for example, which remained after the five thousand had been fed, are to be viewed as representative of so many blessings and privileges of the Gospel: six of which, a preacher having once explained to his hearers in the morning, gravely told them, that in the evening he would entertain them with the remaining six. And I have a perfect personal recollection of being once present, when a man of apparent sincerity and zealous piety, and possessed of no mean celebrity in his own connection, expounded the twelve manner of fruit produced by the tree, which grew by the river of the waters of life, throughout upon



this principle. An occasional accommodation of some of the peculiarities of Scripture, even where there was no original connection or reference for the illustration of principles or duties, specifically announced and enforced in other places, may, indeed, within due limitations be allowable. Such a practice seems not destitute of authority, from the example of our Saviour himself, and his Apostles. But to establish a principle, and to suspend the whole weight of a doctrine upon so uncertain and precarious a basis,—to contend that the whole machinery of the fact, or the emblematic circumstance, like the wheels in Ezekiel's vision, was fabricated for the purpose of embodying the spirit of abstruse and remote meaning, with which it is supposed to be animated, while there does not appear to be any adequate ground for such a supposition,—such a method of interpretation is replete with danger, and seems to come little short of the impiety of adding unto Scripture, and reflecting upon the wisdom of its author. While it is lamentably true that there are many, who, through blindness and carnal prejudice, cannot discern the things of the spirit, when they are openly and palpably presented to their view, upon the surface of clear and express declarations, there unhappily are others endued with such extraordinary powers of perception, with such a species of second sight, as to enable them to discover the presence of a spirit, where in reality, or, at least, according to the concurrent judgment of those whose faculties of vision have generally been considered as

most accurate and discriminative, a spirit does not exist.

But not merely in the application of Scripture, especially its prophetical parts, its parables, and symbolical representations, has the faculty of Imagination been allowed an undue license, and taken too much upon her, but also in explaining the phenomena of nature, and the course of providence, she has been guilty of the same indiscretion, in pointing out coincidences and analogies which are supposed to bear a designed and corroborative relation to the doctrines and mysteries of faith. We mean not to censure a perpetual and devout regard to the great Author and Governor of the world, throughout the whole range of that magnificent display of power, wisdom, and love, which his works universally present, nor to exclude him from a controlling share in the minutest specialities of daily and hourly occurrence. Far be it from us to give any countenance to that shallow and spurious philosophy on the one hand, or that unreflecting levity on the other, which can lose sight for one moment of a supreme primary cause, and a continual superintending Providence. To have the clearest perceptions of a deity originally constituting, and subsequently propelling, regulating, and guiding the complicated wheels of nature, so as to secure that strength and beauty, and harmony, which characterize the stupendous machinery of the universe, we consider to be the part, not so much of imagination, as of sound and enlightened reason. But when Kepler, in his "Mysterium Cos-

mographicum," expresses his delight in the contemplation of the firmament of the fixed stars, the sun, and the immense interval which separates them, and declares, that he considers them as symbolical of the doctrine of the Trinity, he evidently gives the rein to his Fancy, and, by removing that important truth from the basis of its proper evidence, and connecting it with a vague and visionary speculation, for which there does not appear to be any foundation in nature, can hardly fail to prejudice its character, and lessen its probability, in minds of more calm and sober investigation. Nothing is more injurious to a principle liable in any degree to be controverted, than to shift it from its own ground, and to render it most remotely dependent for its certainty, upon fanciful and factitious representations. A devout, but at the same time weak and unguarded man, is exceedingly apt to err again in his observations upon providence, and to suffer the suggestions of his imagination to preponderate over the dictates of his judgment. He will so connect the occurrences of the world around him with the declarations of Scripture, as to regard, as signs of the times, and as involving the most peculiar significancy, things which are perfectly explicable upon the ordinary principles of nature. He will associate together, by ties of arbitrary and incoherent relation, circumstances and events, which, in reality, stand perfectly distinct from each other; in consequence of which, the whole of his character is shaded over with a tinge of superstition, and his religion, in a great measure, degenerates into weak-

ness. Hence the dreams of astrological delusion, the ominous dread or the exhilarating prospect arising from the various aspects and conjunctions of the planetary bodies, and the numberless presages, inauspicious or felicitous, attached to incidents and appearances, from which no operative influence upon the events apprehended or desired, can rationally be supposed to emanate; and we may add, the manifold forms of imposture, which craft and bigotry have in different ages contrived to palm upon devout credulity. Imagination constitutes the spell by which the mind of the devotee has been kept in thrall, and the wand of Antichrist has produced its miraculous effect\*.

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\* Of the process of a fanciful extraction of a spiritual meaning, and of a scriptural truth, from a congeries of fabulous absurdity, a remarkable example was afforded in the case of Mr. Struchtmeyer, a late professor of eloquence and languages in the University of Hardenwyk, in Guelderland, 1757. "In a work which bears the title of the Symbolical Hercules, the learned and wrongheaded author maintains, (as he had also done in a preceding work, entitled *An Explication of the Pagan Theology*,) that all the doctrines of Christianity were emblematically represented in the heathen mythology; and not only so, but that the inventors of that theology knew that the Son of God was to descend upon earth; believed in Christ, as the only fountain of salvation; were persuaded of his future incarnation, death, and resurrection; and had acquired all this knowledge and faith by the perusal of a Bible much older than either Moses or Abraham. The Pagan doctors, thus instructed in the mysteries of Christianity, taught these truths under the veil of emblems, types, and figures. Jupiter represented the true God; Juno, who was obstinate and ungovernable, was the emblem of the ancient Israel; and chaste Diana was a type of the Christian church. Hercules was the figure or forerunner of Christ; Amphytrion was Joseph; the two serpents, that Hercules killed in his cradle, were the Pharisees and Sadducees.

"Such are the principal lines of Mr. Struchtmeyer's system,

## SECTION V.

THE INJURIOUS EFFECT OF UNDISCIPLINED IMAGINATION UPON  
STYLE.

THE last evil which we shall notice, as liable to result from allowing the imagination to exert a predominant influence upon the mind, is that which is connected with *style*. We mentioned it as one of the advantages and beneficial uses attending the due and well-regulated exercise of this noble faculty, that it is of great service in the suitable elevation and embellishment of style, in raising it above all that is low in idea, and mean and grovelling in language. Highly important as this effect is, considered as resulting from a taste refined and sublimated by a well-trained imagination, the danger of running into the extreme of bombast, of indulging in the fantastic puerility of conceit, and of marching in the formal pace of monotonous and frigid declamation, is proportionably great: To form a theological style full and majestic, and yet not turgid; animated and yet chaste; rich, and yet simple; rapid, and yet clear; metaphorical, and yet plain; vigorous, and yet calm; and imaginative, but yet rationally sound and well compacted in its structure, is, indeed, one of the most difficult objects which a speaker or writer has to attain; and of the numberless books in our language, very few can be safely adopted as models. We have,

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which shows the sad havoc that a warm imagination, undirected by a just and solid judgment, makes in religion."—DR. MACLAINE'S *Note to Mosheim's Eccles. Hist.*, vol. i., p. 336.

it is true, many valuable writers, who are pre-eminently distinguished for peculiar and characteristic excellencies, and have advanced, in their congenial and chosen department, to a point of consummate perfection. In one we have the vigour of reason clothed in the language of a close and argumentative logic; in another, we have the sublime conceptions of a towering imagination unfolded in the loftiest strains of poetry; in a third, we have all the simplicity and ardour of the most zealous piety, expressed, with as little variation as possible, in the peculiar dialect of Scripture, like water drawn out of a pure and unadulterated fountain to irrigate a garden of flowers, to fertilize a spot, to refresh a paradise, in which the plants of righteousness are intended to vegetate. There can be no doubt that each of these modifications, which the vehicle of thought, in different individuals, has been found to assume, has its beauty and advantage. But, as Cicero looked in vain for an orator, that would perfectly correspond with that conception of faultless and unrivalled excellence, which he had formed in his own mind, so in the discussion and enforcement of theological questions, it is rarely we discover anything like an approach to that order of superior excellence, which the happy combination of all these qualities of profundity, sublimity, and sacred beauty and elegance, would form. Without any disparagement to the illustrious authors of the last and preceding centuries, not forgetting the nervous eloquence of Hooker, the liveliness of Hall, the splendid and profuse imagery of Taylor, the majestic simplicity



of Leighton, and the philosophic depth and clearness of Butler, and fully sensible of the immense advantage which their successors have derived from their labours, we are disposed to think that there are writers of the present age, in general more free from characteristic defects, and uniting, perhaps, a greater variety of valuable ingredients in the structure of their composition, than most of their predecessors. Those who are accustomed to despise every thing that is modern, and estimate books, to adopt the keen sarcasm of the Sabine bard, according to their years, will be apt to demur to this view of Christian authorship; but we have learnt to abandon a prejudice generally found to arise, if accurately investigated, from a feeling of human nature, which is too reluctant to recognize the claims of contemporary merit.

While, however, we may congratulate ourselves upon that general purity, manliness, and force, to which the style of theology, both from the pulpit and the press, has been carried in our own days, we have still to lament many prevailing errors and deficiencies. But, difficult as we find it, both from observation and humiliating experience, to arrive at such a conformation of language in the habitual delivery of sentiment, as would evince a duly proportioned exercise of all the faculties of the mind, it is easy to discover the evil which is liable to result from the predominant sway and exclusive indulgence of that, whose operations we are now discussing. The most eminent writer, in whom this defect is plainly discernible, and with

whose valuable works it seems essentially interwoven, is, doubtless, Jeremy Taylor. In the multifarious productions of this devout and extraordinary prelate, there is so much grandeur of thought, so much sincerity of purpose, and occasionally so much transcendent beauty of expression, such richness of allusion, such felicity of illustration, and such unaffected pathos, that it is an exercise of self-denial, a sacrifice at the shrine of truth and usefulness, to make any reflection upon the embroidery and superfluous ornament, in which his thoughts are too generally arrayed. For this defect, indeed, he has his apology in the unformed taste of the age in which he lived, and in the powerful and peculiar construction of his own mind; but it is unquestionable that, owing to these circumstances, some of the sentiments dearest to his heart completely fail of their effect. In his discourses he appears embellished with such a profusion of rich and various garniture, fetched from every region of truth and science, from the field of classical and heathen literature and the mountain haunts of the Muses, no less than the hill of Zion, and the flowery vales of divine Revelation, that, on a superficial view, we should be led to question, whether we had before us a minister of the Christian sanctuary, or a high priest of a Grecian temple offering incense to the divinity of poetry and learning. The figure must not be strained, but in the writings, especially in the sermons of this pious prelate, there is certainly a very undue infusion of fanciful combination and profane literature. And in some instances may be applied to him, with little qualification,

what Dr. Johnson has said of Akenside's *Pleasures of Imagination*: "The reader wanders through the gay diffusion, sometimes amazed, and sometimes delighted, but after many turnings in the flowery labyrinth, comes out as he went in. He remarked little, and laid hold on nothing." We have often found, with pain and regret, that while perusing some of the most solemn and affecting of his pieces, some heathen illustration or allusion was introduced, which, by associating with the leading idea a train of extraneous, and, perhaps, frivolous sentiments, destroyed, or greatly enfeebled the salutary impression of the whole.

The same observations are applicable, in a less degree, to the elegant and eminently pious Hervey. In the style which characterizes the estimable writings of this amiable and good man, Imagination, it must be allowed, is rather unduly predominant. But this was the path which he chose, and in which he abundantly succeeded. His talent in this department, and the manner in which he exerted it, were peculiarly his own. Others less richly endowed, or less regulated and controlled by an exquisite refinement of taste, by attempting to walk in his steps, have grievously failed\*. It is a trite and ordinary remark, that the corruption of the best thing is the worst. This is true in nothing more than the imaginative style of writing and speaking upon sacred subjects. While a suitable infusion of the powerful ingredient of imagination gives a vividness, a warmth,

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\* It is a curious circumstance, recorded by the late learned Dr. Parr concerning himself, that, in early life, he formed his style upon the model of that of Hervey.

and an enkindling glow to a composition; in order to produce its due effect, it must be sustained and invigorated by other qualities. Standing prominent and alone, it will either rave into extravagance, amuse itself with turns and quibbles, or languish into sickness and imbecility. A man under the uncontrolled influence of this morbid faculty, and stunning the ear with one continued peal of high-sounding metaphors, puts us in mind of the profane Grecian, who endeavoured to imitate thunder and lightning, by driving his chariot over a bridge of brass, and hurling firebrands around him as he passed. There might be the sound of the one, and the momentary flash of the other, but unattended with the electric energy with which the mighty artillery of nature is propelled. The tone of declamation falls powerless on the ear, and the gleam of artificial figures, like the light of midnight tapers, is cold and cheerless to the eye:—

“The clear harangue, and cold as it is clear,  
Falls soporific on the listless ear.”

Discourses of this nature are sometimes found to be so fertile in a gay and perishing efflorescence, but at the same time so barren of the substantial fruit of reason and sound sense; so rich in fragrant decorations culled from the tasty parterres of fancy, that we are reminded of the banquet of perfumes which Philip ordered to be elegantly set out in the corner of the room for the entertainment of a son of Æsculapius, who laid claim to the character of divinity, and who was therefore justly regarded, by the monarch of Macedon, as above the condition of huma-

nity requiring material food. Thus, in addresses from the pulpit, and in essays and dissertations from the press, we have sometimes to lament the absence of all that is digestible and nutritive; and, instead of the pure waters of the sanctuary immediately conveyed to our lips from the reservoir of eternal truth, are treated only with nicely prepared potions, to which the flowers of imagination have yielded their aromatic essence.

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FROM what has been stated in the prosecution of this inquiry, it appears that imagination, as it is properly cultivated, regulated, and controlled, or as it is allowed to range without limit, to float on the ocean of speculation without the ballast of sound principle, and to plunge into the dark recesses of the invisible world without the safety-lamp of enlightened and well-guarded reason, is capable of being directed to the noblest uses, and of serving the most exalted ends, or of being perverted to the most dangerous and pernicious purposes. Unrestrained by sound wisdom, it has a direct tendency to generate the phantoms of delusion, to urge the career of extravagance, to extinguish the beams of spiritual consolation, and to enfeeble the energy of truth. An instrument thus mighty in operation, forming an element of character inherent in all men, though unequally manifesting its presence in different individuals, like the physical principle of fire existing in all material bodies, though latent in some, and more promptly active in others, according to their peculiar

organizations and radiating powers, it is of the highest importance to be able to turn to the best possible account. Upon the free use and judicious management of this powerful faculty, it depends, whether a minister of the sanctuary, adequately endowed and duly qualified in other respects, shall be a cold, languid, uninteresting, and drily logical expositor of divine truth: or a wild, enthusiastic innovator, confounding speculations with principles, flights of fancy with the sublimities of devotion, and flimsy combinations of rhetorical figures with strength and beauty of composition, on the one hand; or whether, on the other, he shall be an engaging, convincing, and efficient labourer, communicating to immortal souls the doctrines, and inculcating the precepts of the everlasting Gospel. Upon this it depends whether or not he will appear in the firmament of the church, in the full-orbed light, and glowing with the benignant warmth of the sincere and unaffected Christian preacher; whether he will be a burning and a shining light, a star held forth in the hand of the Son of Man, to convey the beams of celestial truth into the golden candlestick of his church. Upon this it depends, in connexion with the influences of the Holy Spirit, which are generally imparted in proportion to the inherent suitableness and efficiency of the instrumental and subordinate agency, and without which, all other means are but like rams' horns directed against the walls of Jericho, whether he will illustrate, with felicity and success, what is abstractedly obscure and indistinct; whether he will enliven, by interesting remark, the otherwise



tedious details of knowledge and duty; whether he will infuse life into his exhortations, energy into his appeals, force into his expostulations, and tender affection into his topics of consolation and encouragement; whether, in short, he will conduct the work of the ministry, with the co-operating aid of divine grace, in the manner most consistent with his high obligations, most satisfactory to his own conscience, most edifying to his hearers, most conducive to the salvation of souls, and, what is more than all, to the advancement of the glory of God.

But not only to the minister of truth is it a matter of high consideration and importance to cherish the enlivening and invigorating efforts of Imagination, while her tendency to aberration and excess must be rigidly disciplined and restrained, but it also deeply concerns the growth, and spirituality, and usefulness of the private Christian, and the welfare of the universal church. Because this active power has been greatly abused and perverted, in common, indeed, with every other principle of our nature, some would have it altogether extinguished, or, at least, banished from religion, as it has long been from physical science, into the more congenial regions of poetry and romance. But surely this is losing sight of the purposes for which our faculties were given us. They were bestowed upon us, to be economized and regulated; not to be cramped, extirpated, and destroyed. Our mental principles, like the mechanical powers of nature, are all capable of a salutary direction, and may be usefully employed in the service of the great Author of our being; and the latter

are altogether as liable to perversion as the former. To exhibit the legitimate use, and to teach the appropriate application, and, at the same time, to guard with the utmost care against the abuses and inordinate excesses of these principles, is the object of the present investigation, and we venture to hope that those, who will candidly and attentively peruse the preceding remarks, will find some useful directions for this purpose. Let those, therefore, in whom Imagination is more torpid and inert, call it forth into exercise, and stir up the gift that is within them, as one of the noblest endowments of their nature. But let those, in whose intellectual system it assumes a more active and mercurial form, be equally solicitous to repress its extravagances and to ward off its illusions. Under the firm restraint of reason, and guided by an enlightened judgment, Imagination may be suffered to range with advantage over the extensive provinces of truth. She may cull whatever is elegant in form, and exquisite in taste; and, soaring upward on the wings of faith, she may ascend to regions of uncreated light, and delight herself with the visions of Eternity.

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## BOOK V.

### AN INQUIRY INTO THE LEGITIMATE USE OF THE AFFECTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION UPON THE CHARACTER.

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Are Passions, then, the pagans of the soul?  
Reason alone baptized—alone ordained  
To touch things sacred?—O for warmer still!—YOUNG.

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## PART I.

### THE JUST USE OF THE AFFECTIONS.

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## SECTION I.

### THE SUBJECT OF INQUIRY STATED.

To the most superficial inquirer into the nature and endowments of man, as a moral and accountable being, it must be obvious, that those feelings or sensitive affections, which accompany various operations of his mind, constitute a very important part of his character\*. The mind, however diversified its aspects, however multiplied its modes of evincing its properties and of exerting its energies, is one indivisible substance; and however necessary it be to analyze what may be considered as its component parts, and to arrange them into systematic order, for the pur-

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\* The celebrated Gregory Nyssen mentions it of some, that they considered the *heart* as the leading part of human nature—*οι εν καρδια το ηγεμονικον ειναι τιθενται*.—De Offic. Hom. cap. 12.

pose of a more clear and distinct apprehension of its general nature, it cannot, we presume, have been supposed, that the mind is really formed of so many separate and independent principles, which may be totally disjoined from each other, and perform their respective functions in that isolated capacity. The principle of mind appears, in some measure, to resemble that of physical vitality. As animal life diffuses itself throughout the whole bodily system, and notwithstanding its own individuality, becomes the means of a great variety of sensations, according to the quality of the organs which receive the immediate impressions, so the mental principle, without violating the essential unity of its character, assumes a multiplicity of forms, according to the nature of the objects upon which it operates; sometimes employing itself in a process of abstract reasoning, sometimes passing its moral verdict in the exercise of the Conscience, sometimes ranging in imaginative excursions, and sometimes glowing with intense emotion in the exercise of the several feelings and affections; sometimes balancing opinions and probabilities in the judgment, sometimes recognizing the traces of past and almost vanished impressions in the memory, and sometimes acting in the prompt and unconstrained energies of the Will. But, amidst all this variety of modifications, who is not aware, that it is one and the same mind which reasons, and imagines and feels; which judges, recollects and wills, corresponding, in many respects, to the Platonic idea of a universal soul of the world so exquisitely described in these lines of Pope:—

“That, changed through all, and yet in all the same,  
Great in the earth, as in the ethereal frame ;  
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
Glowes in the stars, and blossoms in the trees ;  
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,  
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.”

Or, if we may venture to borrow an illustration from a more sacred source, we would say, in the language of St. Paul, “There are diversities of operation, but the same spirit.”

We deem it of importance, that the absolute unity and individuality of the human spirit should be thus clearly laid down, for there is some danger lest the view of its “*disjecta membra*,” as arranged by the anatomical hand of the metaphysician, should give rise to the idea, that it is compounded of so many elements linked together in order to form a whole; like the four distinct principles, which the Epicurean atheist thought quite sufficient to make a soul. Three of these the ingenious poetical expounder of that scheme affirms to be strictly material. Of the fourth, which is the main ingredient in thinking, he is forced to confess his ignorance:—

“Quarta quoque his igitur quædam natura necesse est  
Attribuatur; ea est omnino nominis experts.”

LUCRET., lib. iii.

With the heathen believers in the immortality of the human soul, or rather with those among them who ventured to indulge the transporting hope that it might be immortal, its absolute *simplicity*, its supposed indivisibility, and, consequently, its freedom from all liability to corruption and decay, formed one of the strongest arguments; and however de-



fective might be their reasoning, through the want of the light of Revelation,—for it is evident that it did not prove conclusive and satisfactory to their own minds,—there can be no doubt that the fact, which constituted the basis of that reasoning, was founded in truth.

In order to acquire as accurate a knowledge of the soul, however, as is compatible with our present state, it is convenient to view it as possessed of various distinct faculties; but care must be taken that, in this analysis of the parts, we do not lose sight of the unity of the principle. To obtain a correct view of the structure of the human body, it is not enough to take a superficial survey of its exterior; it is not enough to observe it generally as a whole: but its constituent members must be separated from each other; its interior must be examined; the several muscles and ligaments of every limb must be minutely inspected; every organ must be noticed apart, its connection and relation to other organs investigated, and its various uses discovered. But after this process of dissection, it is necessary to contemplate the whole frame in its united and related capacity. The analogy which thus subsists between mind and body, and is perfectly legitimate to a certain extent, has, we think, been carried much too far in some metaphysical systems. The phraseology of the operating theatre and the laboratory has been so liberally employed in the examination of the powers of the mind, as if the intellectual principle was a system of material organization to be separated, or of chemical ele-

ments to be decomposed. But in this curious, and, within due limits, useful and necessary analysis, it appears rather remarkable that so little attention has been paid to the faculty of feeling or affection\*. These surely constitute as essential, and important a part of the human mind as those of Reason, Imagination, Memory, and Judgment. To overlook these in a system of intellectual and mental philosophy, in a professed survey of the world of the human soul, seems to be as great a defect as if a treatise on anatomy confined its researches to the description of the head, the brain, and the extremities of the system, while it left the heart,—the central and most influential part of the whole, as connected with the health and activity of the body,—altogether untouched. Such a performance might exhibit a very accurate detail of the matter, the form, the linear divisions, and cellular vessels of the brain, and subjoin a phrenological disquisition upon every external protuberance of the cranium. It might present a very distinct outline of the general system, and show the mutual dependencies subsisting between various parts of the frame; but who would deem it a complete manual of the science, if it left wholly untouched, or but transiently noticed, the important anatomy of the heart? We maintain,

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\* In Dr. Brown's splendid and comprehensive work, this department of the Mind is more fully investigated than in most preceding treatises of Metaphysics. He has viewed the human mind under its two distinguishing characteristics, as presenting intellectual states and emotions, in accordance with the following statement of Cicero: "Est enim animus in partes distributus *duas*, quarum altera rationis est particeps; altera expers."—*Quæst. Tusc.*, lib. iii.

that sensitive Affections, as distinct from Reason and Imagination, Will and Conscience, constitute as essential and natural a part of the philosophy of mind, as the systole and diastole of the heart, and the circulation of the blood, fall within the sphere of anatomical science.

One of the reasons, probably, why this circumstance has been so little regarded, and why the heart has been so greatly neglected by those who have been engaged in analyzing the powers of the mind, is, that the sensitive affections are generally considered as more closely connected with the body, and as forming a subordinate part of human nature, and, therefore, as hardly entitled to the dignity of mental principles. That the feelings of the heart are very closely associated with the state of the body; that there is a powerful reciprocal influence carried on between them; that they respectively reflect much of their character upon each other, cannot be denied. But of the sublimest and most refined operations of the understanding, it may be unquestionably affirmed, that they are greatly dependent upon the system of the material organization, with which they are more immediately conversant. We are not aware that, in the present state of man, he can form a single idea, or exert one faculty, without the instrumental aid of the corporeal apparatus, which has been provided for him. And, doubtless, much of the energy of mind, much of the striking disparity observable in different individuals, results from the varied degrees of activity and suitableness as belonging to these physical engines. It

is readily granted, however, that sensitive affection belongs to a lower order of mental operations, that it is often most active in those persons who are least refined in understanding, and that it is more liable to be abused and perverted, than those exercises of pure intellect, which stand at a wider distance from the line of practical conduct.

But surely Feeling, as an exercise of the heart, cannot be considered less a mental operation, than the various acts of external perception, the use of the five senses; the nature of the ideas communicated by which has employed the elaborate investigation of one of the most distinguished inquirers into the principles of the human mind. Dr. Reid, doubtless, conceived himself to be ranging within the legitimate province of mind, when he prosecuted with so much ardour the discussion of the doctrine of ideas, as connected with common sense. That he most grossly mistook the meaning of the term *idea*, as used by Locke, and has been followed by most of his disciples in the mistake, we have always been inclined to think. That the profound author of the *Essay of Human Understanding* never intended to attribute a real and independent existence to ideas, but that he merely considered them as modes or instruments of thinking, must be obvious to any one, who will read him with candour and discernment. What perverse use infidels may have made of his notions, and what extravagant theories they have built upon them, is quite another question, and ought to be met upon its own ground. But it is impossible not to feel the injustice which

has been done to that great philosopher, in ascribing an absurd meaning to his words, which he obviously never designed to attach to them\*.

Every perception and affection belonging to a human being, whether seated in the head or the heart, are properly acts of the mind. The chief difference is, that the latter is attended with a livelier and more tumultuous emotion, either of pain or pleasure, of joy or sorrow. It is what Hume would have called an *impression* in opposition to the more calm and abstract operations of the intellect, which he termed *ideas*. We would have it distinctly understood, that by *affections*, as about to be employed in this Inquiry, we mean not that varied emotion, which arises from the actual and immediate exercise of the outward senses, such as accompanies the use of the power of vision, or the touch. But we mean those feelings of the mind which are excited by views of the understanding or representations of the imagination,—such as love to an object, which is conceived to be beautiful and attractive; or the fear of a danger, which is known, from unimpeachable testimony, to be dreadful and imminent. The English language does not supply a

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\* The author has since read with great delight the masterly vindication of Locke, against the mistakes and pretended confutations of Dr. Reid and his followers by Dr. Brown. It is perfectly astonishing, as that eloquent writer truly remarks, that the northern philosopher, in addition to his real merits, which were great, should so long have had the imaginary merit allowed him, of having made a discovery in the science of mind, which, to use the strong language of another distinguished countryman of Dr. Reid,—the Rev. Edward Irving, originated in a “great blunder.”

term which precisely answers to this idea; for sensation and affection are too vague and indistinct to express it, the former generally applied to an impression produced by the immediate operation of the bodily organs, and the latter in its more usual acceptation designative of the simple emotion of love. The Germans use the term *æsthetics*, though not generally applied by them to religious emotions or perceptions, to convey an idea of those feelings of the soul, which form, as it were, the connecting link between body and mind.

We may advantageously consider the faculties of the human mind as applicable to the various doctrines and obligations of religion. Reason, as standing uppermost in the mental scale, is most suitably employed in investigating the general principles, in scanning the evidences, in estimating the importance, in removing the difficulties, in harmonizing the apparent discrepancies, and in demonstrating the truth of religion. The Conscience is concerned with moral relations and requirements. The Will may be regarded as more peculiarly connected with the exercise of a cheerful submission to the divine authority, and a free and unrestrained obedience to the divine commands. Imagination being a livelier and more excursive faculty, and less controlled by the rigid laws of logical precision and argumentation than the first of these faculties, delights in exhibiting the beauty and loveliness of religion; in presenting her to the view in the most impressive, engaging, and attractive forms; in clothing her with a lustre reflected from every



thing that is fair and excellent in the whole range of nature—in the whole firmament of knowledge; in recommending her to the understanding and the heart, by all that Reason can approve, by all that prudence can dictate, by all that fear can apprehend, by all that hope can anticipate, and all that faith can realize and substantiate within the confines of the invisible world, and throughout the evolutions of eternity. But to give effect to the demonstrations of Reason, the decisions of the Will, the verdict of the Conscience, and the splendid lights of Imagination, deep and fervent Affection of heart must lend her aid. The office of Reason is to strengthen the outworks, and to guard the citadel of truth; that of Imagination is to adorn and embellish the various passages and entrances which lead to her presence-chamber, the place of her permanent abode. But devout Affection is the inner sanctuary, where she dwells; the pavilion, in which she delights to repose, and from which she sends forth the energy of her influence throughout every department of her legitimate dominions. Each one of these functions is highly important in itself, and is obviously designed and admirably suited to meet the peculiar character and exigencies of human nature, nor do we wish, in any degree, to elevate the office and importance of one faculty, to the injury and depreciation of another.

In the former parts of this work we have investigated, at some length, the legitimate use of Reason, Will, the Conscience, and the Imagination, in their relation to the subject of religion. It remains, that

we should institute a similar investigation into the general warrant—the expediency and legitimate extent of Feeling, as forming an element or component part of the Christian character. On this, as well as on every other question of religion, a great diversity of opinion has prevailed. Some would banish the sensitive affections altogether from the territory of truth, as aliens intruding into a domain, which they are not authorized or qualified to enter. They regard *feeling* as a drossy ingredient in the character of religion, as a frothy effervescence, invariably symptomatic of a state of unwholesome fermentation. Others, accustomed to dwell in a warmer latitude, regard the researches of reason and the deductions of sound argument, as too cold and cheerless for the interesting realities of religion, and deem the sallies of imagination too light and airy for the gravity and simplicity of the Christian faith. They therefore place the sum and substance of religion in the ardour and energy of feeling; and as the strength and spirit of a liquid are frequently estimated by the vehemence of its tendency to expand and explode, they measure the validity of the religious principle by the internal tumultuation which it creates, and the impetuosity with which it occasionally bursts forth. It is our aim, in these discussions, to hold the balance between extremes of every kind, to give every leading faculty its full play, to give every element of mind its appropriate range of action, and, by combining their operations in due proportion, to exhibit an order of character, in which no endowment should injuriously preponderate, but that all, mutually

sustaining and sustained, enlightening and enlightened, animating and animated in return, might present, in delightful harmony and union, the strength and manliness of Reason, the unfettered freedom, but, at the same time, the invariable steadiness and uniformity of the Will, the soundness of a well regulated Conscience, the vigour and liveliness of Imagination, and all the fervency and earnestness of the most ardent Affection. This, we are persuaded, is the scriptural plan. When the inspired writers set before us the example of a character deserving our imitation, and claiming our regard, they do not hold forth to our view "the fragments of a soul immortal,"—one energetic quality standing out with an ill-proportioned and almost distressing prominence, appearing to overwhelm and annihilate every other endowment equally necessary in its place. But with them, knowledge and zeal, reason and faith, imagination and affection, are severally made to fill the outline, and to complete the harmony of the system. It is only in the narrowness of artificial plans, and of human schemes of religion, that these principles are found to clash with each other. In that which Jehovah has set before us, they have abundant room to expand and unfold themselves, without in the slightest degree interfering with the movements of each other. The very symmetry of the human frame would lead us to the same conclusion. The very balance of the human constitution, in all other respects, would teach us the same doctrine. And whenever there is found a great and striking deviation from this rule, it is invariably regarded as a monstrous specimen of humanity.

Pursuing the same mode of discussion in general, as we have adopted in the former Parts, we shall first endeavour to show the necessity and importance of the affections, as connected with the subject of religion; and then notice some of the evils and mistakes liable to arise from the excessive indulgence, or from erroneous views of sensitive Emotion, as a constituent of the Christian character.

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## SECTION II.

### SENSITIVE AFFECTION ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO BE EMPLOYED IN THE SERVICE OF RELIGION.

1. WITH a view to the elucidation of the first branch of this argument, we may remark, that *all the elements of the human character*, that all the *mental* as well as physical ingredients, which enter into the nature of man, of which sensitive affection forms an important portion, were originally *designed* to be mainly *employed in the service of Jehovah*. Why, then, is it that many persons so greatly object to the use and necessity of feeling, in the performance of the duties of religion? It cannot be their mere liability to abuse and perversion; for the very same objection might be urged against the use of Reason and every other faculty of mind. What power of man, in his present corrupt and degraded state, is not continually abused? And if we are to withdraw from the service of religion every principle which is capable of perversion, we shall speedily rob her of all her

subjects, and count them as rebels, unworthy of being admitted into her confidence. Reason often degenerates into scepticism, Will into caprice, Conscience into passion, and Imagination into extravagance and romance; and the active energies of man into instruments of impiety and profaneness. Upon the plea of abuse, therefore, we have the very same ground for excluding these from the pale of religion; and the result will be the expulsion of all religion from the world. This, however, we do not conceive to be the real ground of the objection. It appears more natural to suppose that it arises from a distaste, a disinclination, amounting, in some cases, to absolute hatred, directed against religion itself. When an object is contemplated at a distance, as a matter of mere speculation, it is comparatively of little consequence whether it be congenial or obnoxious to the mind. If it is only required to believe its existence, and to acknowledge certain general facts relating to its character; if, moreover, it be enjoined to go through a routine of outward performances, in order to avert a train of dangers and evils which it threatens, and to secure an order of advantages which it holds forth,—if this be the whole amount of the connection which it is to have with the character; if it claims no nearer access to the sanctuary of the heart, it is deemed a point of indifference what may be the real principles and elements, of which it is composed. Though it were, in its own nature, in the highest degree offensive to the mind, yet, under the influence of the apparent necessity of the case, there would be, for the most part, a readiness to yield this

external and distant homage. This would be deemed the wisest and safest measure. Nor would such a superficial recognition require any sacrifice of former feelings and predilections. But if the matter is to be brought into closer contact with the character; if an entrance is demanded for it into the hidden man of the heart; if it must mingle with the whole stream of the affections, and exert a predominant influence in the regulation and direction of their course, then the case is essentially different. Then, if the individual be sensible of a strong indisposition to make such a surrender of his feelings to the object, and yet the necessity of it strongly enforced upon him, it is obvious that his most violent opposition and enmity will be called forth. Such appears to be the state of feeling in a large portion of mankind towards the important subject of religion. They are, by nature, not only destitute of all inherent propensity towards it; they are not only without any antecedent predilection for its services; but they are actuated by emotions of powerful and positive hostility against it, whenever it is recommended to their acceptance, and inculcated as a paramount duty upon their consciences. Their hearts are pre-engaged by other objects; and, therefore, contract with icy antipathy whenever its claims to their regard are enforced. As they are experimentally acquainted with none of those warm and glowing emotions, of those animating hopes and ardent aspirations, which religion, received into the heart, never fails to awaken, they labour to steel themselves into a conviction, that it is a question which stands wholly isolated from the



feelings; and that it requires nothing more than an intellectual assent to certain theological tenets, and a decent discharge of the most ostensible and prominent duties of life. By this means, they escape the condemnation of their own consciences; delude themselves into a lulling security; and, at the same time, are allowed to yield their affections to those objects of frivolity or dissipation, to which they had been hitherto accustomed. This appears to be the main ground of the reluctance with which many persons admit the heart into a participation in the blessings and privileges, the genuine fruits and graces of the Gospel, as flourishing in the soil of a renewed mind—their consciousness of being utterly destitute of these affections and their desire still to retain their present habits and predilections.

A capacity of feeling, or of being actuated by the several emotions of joy and sorrow, of fear and love, of hatred and delight, constitutes a primary and elementary power in the nature of man. This faculty is the most active and influential of all the principles of his moral being. It is the main source of his happiness and misery. It is the most keenly alive, the most susceptible of impression, in the whole order of his mental capacities. The intellect is often tardy in its movements, dull in its apprehensions, and languid in its operations. The Imagination, the Will, the Memory, and the Judgment, are not unfrequently dormant, and fail to perform with suitable energy their various appropriate functions. But feeling, like the phosphoric taper, is ready to kindle at the slightest touch.

As the depravity, consequent upon the fall, took its strongest position in the heart, and spread its most destructive ravages, its most disastrous effects, its most ruinous desolation, through the province of the affections; as the heart is the central point from which sin's pestilential vapours flow forth in every direction; as it is the fountain of bitterness—the dead sea, from which a thousand streams of corrupt effluvia are constantly rising up and tainting the whole atmosphere of the soul; as it is the hostile camp, which forms the rendezvous of every rebel passion that lifts its standard of enmity and war against the Majesty of heaven and the legitimate Sovereign of earth,—we may fairly presume, that in its original state, it constituted the loveliest portion of our nature. It was the bright spot, upon which the eye of Heaven dwelt with most complacency, amidst a scene that was all beauteous and magnificent. Ardent love to the beneficent Author of his being was the most brilliant gem in that star of glory, which blazed upon the heart of man. But when that star fell, when the glory departed, and Ichabod became the fit emblem to mark the turn of our destiny, no where did the catastrophe prove more fatal; no where did the ruin appear more complete; no where did the moral darkness which succeeded, assume a form of deeper and more settled gloom than in the heart. The understanding retains somewhat of its original brightness. Reason is not wholly extinct. The intellectual faculties in general, even in their fallen and ruined condition, may be raised by a course of discipline and education to

a considerable degree of elevation. The mind may be so expanded by reading and reflection as to form theoretic views of divine truth not far from correct. But the heart has received a deeper wound, and labours under a more incurable distemper—a distemper, which nothing short of the power of the Omnipotent can effectually remove; and one of the worst symptoms of which is, that it has become hardened into a stony insensibility to its own diseased condition.

But, because the heart has sunk into this state of moral impotence, wretchedness, and gloom, and become the seat of a carnal mind, which is enmity against God, are we, therefore, to conclude that it was originally created with these qualities belonging to it,—that it was designed to be the residence of such inmates as now possess it, and that it is proper it should always continue the abode of degrading passions, instead of the sanctuary of holy love and truth? Such a notion must surely be inconsistent with the original plan, and with the final end of our existence. For what were we made? Why was a heart capable of loving and fearing placed in our bosom? Why was the glow of ardent affection ever kindled in our breast? Does not the possession of every capacity imply that there is an object, upon which it may be usefully and legitimately exercised, and, in the enjoyment of which, it may receive its appropriate gratification? Nature suggests, Scripture declares, reason demonstrates, that we were made to serve and enjoy our Creator. *Non nobis nati*

*sumus*—we were not born out of the womb of nothing for ourselves. We were endowed with the powers of feeling and affection, as well as of understanding that we possess, for the purpose of exerting and laying them out upon Him, who is their alone adequate and satisfactory object. Nor can we easily conceive a more preposterous and absurd idea, than that man should be required to know and recognize his Maker with the powers of his understanding, and practically serve and obey him in the diligent and uniform observance of those laws of conduct, which he has prescribed, while the heart is to stand apart at a cheerless distance from him, never to glow with the rapture of his love, nor to expand with swelling emotions of the grandeur and magnificence of his character. Such a separation of light and warmth from each other; such a disruption of the ties by which man is most strongly bound to the Author of his being; such a disorganization of the system, in which the wheels of external conduct are closely connected with, and entirely dependent upon, the spring of motion in the heart; such a confusion of powers thrown out of their mutual relation and subserviency to each other, indicates an utter forgetfulness of that simplicity and harmony, which naturally marked the whole machinery of the human character. Considering our universal dependency upon Jehovah, and the original subordination of all our faculties of mind and body to his glory; regarding him as the centre, to which all our powers should tend, as the ocean, from which the streams of our enjoyments flow, and to which the streams of our gratitude and

obedience should return, we see no imaginable reason that can be assigned, why the affections should not be called forth in his service in all their energy and force,—why feeling should be dead unto Him, and to the transcendent concerns, which revelation and religion have unfolded to our view, while it is alive to every meaner object, and ready to burst into a flame under the influence of the most trifling earthly excitement. What a strange and unaccountable economy must that have been, which should have exempted man from the duty of supremely loving and fearing the God by whom he was made ! Under such circumstances, we may conceive his Creator thus to address him: “You are peremptorily required to know me; you are bound to employ your powers of understanding in contemplating my character, in investigating the laws of my creation, and in surveying the monuments of my power; you are imperatively enjoined to keep my commandments, to frame the whole system of your conduct with a strict correspondence to my written law; you are to be regular and precise in the observance of the external duties and ceremonies of religion; you are to go through, with mechanical accuracy, the whole range of ritual performances. But, as for the movements of your hearts, as to that busy play of feelings and affections, which takes place within you; as to that powerful impulse of sensitive emotions, by which you are liable to be irresistibly driven onward, these things are to me a matter of indifference. Your hearts may freeze into apathy, or dissolve under the melting influence of worldly objects. Your affec-

tions may be wrapped up in the dormancy of absolute insensibility, or they may unfold at the attraction, and be roused at the call of other applicants. To my service they are aliens, and tend only to create a needless and inconvenient disturbance."

Such, in the very best view of it, would be a system of moral government, from which the sensitive affections should be excluded. The disorders which would necessarily ensue under such a government we need not point out. They must be obvious to every considerate mind.

But not only is man naturally endowed with those susceptibilities of feeling and affection which in a peculiar manner qualify him for a subject of moral government, but there is, moreover, in the character and administration of Jehovah, as exhibited on the page of Scripture, and as developed in the course of his providence, a remarkable suitableness to call forth and engage those powers. It is impossible, indeed, that the heart of man should be properly affected, that internal sensation should duly correspond with the state of things, with the views of the understanding, with the dictates of the judgment, with the dangers and obligations of the present time, and with the varied prospects of futurity, without an order of sentiments and emotions being called forth of a most profound and impressive nature. One of the most powerful and active sensations of which the mind of man is capable, is that of *Love*. And what can be better calculated to awaken this tender and energetic feeling, and to fan it into a flame, to rouse it into the highest degree of concentrated



force and intensity, than those marvellous manifestations of divine goodness which are displayed in providence and grace? It is the established order of nature, it is an original law in the constitution of the human mind, and continually developed in the exercise of human feelings, that love should create love. This affection is, of all others, the most contagious and reciprocal; and where there is no previous antipathy, where there is no diametrical opposition of character, no collision of feeling upon every point of importance, it is impossible that the view of kindness, generosity, and benignity, should not in some measure kindle it in the soul. The reason why mankind in general are not more strongly actuated by this devout affection towards God is, that such antecedent hostility against him is in malignant operation in their souls; that a root of bitter enmity to his character, his attributes, and the whole order of his government, has sprung up in their hearts, rendering any reciprocation of kindly feeling in such a state of things utterly impossible. But when that deadly plant has been rooted up, when the enmity of the carnal mind has been slain, and a principle of enlightened, lively, and operative faith has been introduced into the heart in its stead, then the smile of divine beneficence is attended with its appropriate and congenial effect. With a mind thus purified from the old leaven of malice, with a heart thus regenerated and transformed\*, now rendered susceptible of

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\* Totum enim Cor in his quatuor affectionibus est, et de his accipiendum puto quod dicitur, ut in toto corde tuo convertaris ad Dominum. Convertatur *Amor* tuus, ut nihil omnino diligas nisi

the genuine impressions of Jehovah's character, and accessible to those benign influences, against which it was hitherto closed in impenetrable hardness and insensibility, who can look around him and expatiate over the wide field of divine goodness and compassion, and not feel the emotions of affectionate admiration and glowing gratitude rising up within him? While he sends his thoughts backward, and endeavours to penetrate the depth of that eternity, in which the counsels of Jehovah's peace and love towards man are inscrutably and unfathomably concealed; while he glances at the incipient development of these merciful designs, and views the orient beams of creation breaking forth amidst the darkness and vacuity of boundless space, and man selected to be an object of the special regard of his Maker; while he witnesses the dismal catastrophe of the fall, and perceives Jehovah, unsolicited and uncalled, except by the tender accents of his own mercy, stepping forward to obviate its evils, and, by an effusion of loving-kindness, which will be a theme of joy and adoration throughout eternity, raising the prospective condition of man into a nobler elevation, in consequence of the very fall which he had experienced; while he travels through the successive stages of time, and notices the gradual evolution of the plan

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*Ipsum aut certe propter psum. Convertatur etiam ad Ipsum Timor tuus, quia perversus est timor omnis, quo metuis aliquid præter eum aut non propter eum. Sic et Gaudium tuum et Tristitia æque convertatur ad ipsum. Quid enim perversum magis quam lætari, cum malefeceris, et in rebus pessimis exultare? — BERNARD. Serm. ii. De Conversione.*

of redeeming love until it has reached its crisis in the pathetic scene of the incarnation, sufferings, and death of the only begotten Son of God; while, with the eye of faith, he looks forward to the eventful consequences of this amazing transaction, and soars upward to the bright abode of the Eternal, to witness the blissful consummation of the system, of which his wisdom and love laid the foundation; while he allows his thoughts to range over this rich and widely extended scene—a scene, the noblest and most glorious which can engage the admiring contemplation of mortal man, nay, of an immortal spirit, is it possible that, to use the language of the two disciples, his heart should not burn within him? We can have no sympathy with the man; we cannot, upon any principle of Christian consistency, understand the mental constitution of him, who, professing to believe all these things, will maintain that religion has not to do, most materially to do, with the affections. What must be the state of that heart, which, under an economy established for the special good of man, can contemplate “love without end, and without measure grace,” and yet retain the cold-blooded apathy of the most perfect indifference and unconcern, while the unnatural and death-like quietude, disguising a real hostility, is at one time called by the name of philosophy, and at another, by that of reason and good sense? If this be philosophy, then must wisdom be excluded from the heart; if this be good sense, then must gratitude cease to feel. Upon this principle every axiom of moral science must be overthrown. The whole order of human motives

must be inverted. While the smallest kindness is allowedly entitled to a feeling of kindly regard in return, the greatest can lay claim to none. Gratitude and love must lessen, in proportion to the magnitude of their exciting cause, until, at last, they are absolutely annihilated, and evaporate in airy speculation and verbal acknowledgment.

*Fear* is another affection naturally implanted in the human breast, and, under due regulation and management, is calculated to exert a powerful and salutary influence in the formation of the Christian character. While the attributes of Deity, and the principles of His government, are such as tend, in the highest degree, to attract the love and gratitude of his innocent and obedient creatures, and while these are the feelings, doubtless, most prevalent and influential among them, yet, to beings situated as we are, a filial and reverential fear is a very useful and necessary appendage. And if the goodness of God is such as must infallibly engage the love of those, whose hearts can duly appreciate it; so his severity, as displayed in his threatenings, as embodied in his law, and as frequently exhibited in the infliction of deserved punishment upon those, who rose in open rebellion against Him, is equally calculated to excite the awe and apprehension of mankind. The terrors of the Lord St. Paul considers a legitimate topic of ministerial expostulation. To wield this powerful weapon with suitable effect, to use it with such well-guarded force as to render it "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds," without inflicting unseemly wounds upon the living stones of

the spiritual temple, requires indeed much prudence, experience, and skill; but in a tender, cautious, and, at the same time, energetic hand, it is of the highest utility and importance.

It is remarked by the profound and admirable Bishop Butler, "that reflections of this kind are not without their terrors to serious persons, the most free from enthusiasm, and of the greatest strength of mind. But it is fit that things be stated and considered as they really are; and there is in the present age a certain fearlessness with regard to what may be hereafter under God's government, which nothing but an absolute demonstration on the side of Atheism can justify, and which makes it quite necessary that men be reminded, and if possible, made to *feel* that there is no sort of ground for being thus presumptuous." When, indeed, we consider the present character and future prospects of man; when we bear in mind that he is guilty, polluted, and depraved; that his soul is a wilderness of moral desolation, over which the fire of divine anger would pass with consuming force, unless it was restrained by the controlling influence of His grace and love; when we reflect that he is under the government, and is to receive his destiny at the hand of a God, who is omnipotent in power and inflexible in justice, as well as infinite in compassion and love; it is, indeed, astonishing that a human being should exist, who should dare to lift up the front of presumption and to wave the banner of rebellion against heaven. It is wonderful, not merely that man should be altogether uninfluenced by this consideration, but that he should ever be

exempt from it. Fear assuredly becomes a being, who is guilty, and has no absolute security, except so far as he has ground to believe that he has made a transition to a new and covenanted relation unto God, that he shall be finally acquitted; who is surrounded with dangers, and yet is impotent to avert them: who has an interest at stake, the duration and importance of which the years of eternity will be too short to calculate. Who can duly reflect upon these things, and not feel that the sensation of fear has been wisely implanted in the breast of man, and that directed to sin and its consequences, as the most dreadful of all evils, and mingled with gratitude and reverential affection, as it regards the great Sovereign of the Universe, it was designed to be his preservative from danger, the shield of his protection, and the palladium of his safety?

As man in his present state is enveloped in doubt and uncertainty; as he can realize but an indistinct vision of his prospects, through the mist of futurity, which overshadows them, *Hope* acquires a great importance in the history of his character, and is as an angel sent down from heaven to walk by his side, to conduct his steps through the wilderness, and to lift up her exhilarating torch to cheer him amidst the gloom with which he is surrounded. It is with reluctance, that he ever allows this choice companion to abandon him, and it is not until every calculation has been baffled, every effort failed, and every fair probability of deliverance or success has vanished, that he suffers himself to be precipitated into the dungeon of dark despair. What too frequently in-



volves him in misery and disappointment, however, is, that instead of cherishing the hope, which came down *from* heaven, and whose guiding light would have conducted him *to* heavem, he attaches himself to those illusive images, which, like the luminous exhalations of marsh-ground, can only embarrass him and enveigle his steps. In the character of Jehovah, as formed of every combination of moral excellency, as uniting in itself every thing, which not only can awaken love and excite fear, but also encourage confidence, and in the Gospel, as an economy of grace, there is a hope set before him, which can neither deceive nor disappoint him; which can neither raise his expectations too high, nor will suffer his apprehensions to sink too low. It is by this means that the balance of the human mind is maintained, that the equipoise of the character is preserved; that while the sea of danger is rough, while the waves of discouragement rise high, there may be a principle within, which, by taking anchorage upon the immovable rock of the divine promises, may keep the vessel above water, and secure its stability amidst the storm. The character and prospective circumstances of man, connected with those aids and supports which are pledged in the promises of God, are so accurately and remarkably proportioned, and so mutually adapted to each other, as to inspire hope, without engendering presumption. The highest in the scale of Christian attainment, can seldom rise higher than the full assurance of hope; and he who is yet at the foot of the hill is not debarred some of its consolations. Like the early traveller, he is

cheered by some golden streaks of the morning sun resting upon the acclivities before him, and these afford him an encouraging presage of the splendour of the noonday light. It is a distinguishing feature of Christian hope, that it continues firm and immovable amidst all the changes and perturbations of life. It has a steadiness which resists the impression of every gale; it has a buoyancy which enables it to rise superior to every wave. How great, therefore, must be the dreariness and desolation of that breast, how lonely must be the gloom of that heart, which is a stranger to this hope! If Alexander, when he had distributed all his possessions, still thought himself rich in the possession of a hope, which was dependent upon the issue of sieges and battles, upon the vicissitudes of fortune and all the contingencies of war, how secure, how affluent may *he* regard himself, who has all that is immutable in Jehovah for the foundation of his hope, who has all that is comprised in the unsearchable riches of Christ as the inventory of his promised wealth!

A modification of feeling closely allied to hope, but more vehement in its operations, and generally directed to objects of speedier gratification, is that of *Desire*. When this sensation is strong and impetuous, it is attended with a degree of uneasiness until its object is attained. The channels, in which the streams of this affection flow, are regulated for the most part by the views entertained of the chief sources of happiness. The worldly man places his delight in those objects, to which his constitutional habits or his circumstances naturally incline him.

Towards these, therefore, his desires mainly flow. In these he expects satisfaction; nor is the repeated testimony of experience sufficient to remove the illusion, to correct the aberration, under which he labours, and to convince him that, in these, satisfaction is not to be found. There is in the human soul a capacity of enjoyment, an amplitude of intellectual and moral dimensions, with which no earthly object fully corresponds. Hence there is a continual sense of vacuity experienced in the breast: there is always an indistinct idea, some obscure apprehension of a fulness of happiness, which has never yet been realized. With those who have almost every source of worldly gratification at their nod, this perpetual craving after something, of which they can only feel the want, but cannot form a clear conception, assumes the character of more frequent disappointment. In such cases life is little else than a monotonous iteration, a never-varying succession of eager desires and peevish dissatisfactions. These, like the alternate movements of light and shade, form the chequer-work of a large portion of human existence.

But when the eyes of the understanding have been illumined from above, when the immortal spirit has been taught its own origin and destiny, its predominant inclinations and propensities experience an entire and almost universal change. The subordinate and multiform desires, by which it was propelled in an endless variety of directions, are turned like so many minor and diverging streams into one grand channel. The different forces, by which the Will was torn and distracted, are concentrated into

one mighty force and coalesce into one great energy, which carries the soul upward to Jehovah himself as the alone adequate portion. In his character there are resources which are more than commensurate with the utmost demands and exigencies of human nature. It was not without reason, therefore, nor without abundant encouragement, that the Psalmist declared that his *desire* was toward the Lord his God. When we speak of Jehovah as an object of desire and a portion to his people, we use language familiar to the volume of revelation, and with slight modification, not infrequently employed by the more intellectual and refined among the heathen philosophers. The more enlightened and elevated schools of morality and even of superstition have always regarded Him as the chief good, conscious as they were of the inadequacy of all inferior objects; and many of them, especially the comprehensive and wide-spread system of Brahminical theology, represent mankind as rising by successive gradations of spiritualization and abstraction until they are ultimately absorbed in Him—until, like refluent rays, they are completely swallowed up in the sun, from which they first emanated. These erroneous but sublime conceptions are doubtless to be regarded as faint reflections of that glorious fact developed and illustrated in Scripture, that the human soul is a stranger upon earth, meets here no objects fully equal to its capacities, and, where it has been renewed and sanctified by grace, has a strong and continual tendency to rise to a loftier scene, to breathe a purer atmosphere, and to regain its native seat, and to find a completeness, a

permanence of bliss in the bosom of its Father and its God. The devout Psalmist of Israel had so deep an impression of this truth, he had so exalted an idea of the unfathomable depth, of the boundless magnitude of the happiness resulting from the fruition of God, that he does not hesitate to avow Him to be the whole of his hope and the whole of his desire. And the Apostle of the Gentiles appears to have been actuated by the very same idea, when he uttered the fervent and affectionate prayer, that his Christian brethren, to whom he was writing, might be filled with all the fulness of God. In Jehovah, therefore, the desires of his faithful servants meet as in their centre, terminate as in their end, and rest as having attained the utmost felicity which a human being is capable of enjoying.

We shall mention but one more species of sensitive feeling as a constituent of the nature of man, and required to enter as an ingredient into the formation of the Christian character. When we speak of *Hatred* as an element in that character, it will not be supposed that we mean to represent this affection as essential under all circumstances to the service of God, or as in any way exercised towards Jehovah himself. As we regard a capability of hatred, in its various forms and modifications, as a principle divinely implanted in the human mind, and as susceptible of a very salutary operation under a system of moral government, into which sin has gained an entrance, we do not consider by any means that it should be altogether extinguished. The Bible abounds with attributions

of this quality to the Deity himself; not, indeed, that we are to suppose Jehovah as actually subject to the influence of this or any other affection, as they are properties of the human character; but it must be observed at the same time, that no property can be justly ascribed unto Him in the way of condescending adaptation to our infirmity, which would convey ideas derogatory to his character. No act can emanate from Him, which, by the remotest analogy, can be traced to a principle or affection, which would be unworthy of his nature, and inconsistent with his supreme excellencies. And as such analogies and relations frequently do subsist between his conduct towards his sinful creatures, and those actions which proceed from hatred or anger in man, we consequently find Him described in Scripture as actuated by emotions of the deepest abhorrence against sin, and of the most vehement indignation against impenitent sinners. The perfection of his nature, indeed, excludes the passion of hatred or any of its co-ordinate modifications of feeling; but the very circumstance of its being attributed unto Him, is a sufficient proof that it is not universally to be renounced and annihilated in the soul of man.

It is the perversion of hatred, it is the malignant effect produced by it when directed towards *persons* instead of *things*, it is the horrors and miseries which it leads in its train, when allowed to degenerate into malice and resentment, which has rendered it so justly odious to mankind, and caused it to be so generally branded with reprobation in the pages of holy Scripture. That this powerful principle may



answer its end in the government of God, and in the regulation of human conduct, it is necessary that it be directed simply and entirely towards sin as a violation of the divine law, as the act of a responsible and voluntary agent, and as involving those who indulge in it in guilt and inevitable misery. In this point of view, and strictly regulated by these considerations, it is hardly possible that the principle of hatred should be carried too far, or should operate with undue energy. Under these limitations it should move in a line parallel with the love of holiness, and it may exist in its mightiest and most influential vigour in the benevolent bosom of an angel.

We have found, therefore, that the faculties of man, including all the original elements of his constitution, were designed and adapted to be called forth in the various departments of the service of his Creator. On this ground it is impossible, consistently, to reject or exclude the affections comprising all those modifications of feeling, which flow forth in the several channels of sensitive emotion. The capacity of being actuated by these emotions, was a primary part of our being—a first rudiment of our nature, and by no means a quality superinduced by the fall. It must, therefore, have been inwrought into our composition by the all-wise Creator, for some great and important end, and this end could be no other than that it might be exercised upon Himself, and in subordinate reference to his law, his worship, and his service. Hence it was strikingly observed by some one, that if he could make a being

such as man; if he could endue him with animal life, with physical powers, and intellectual and rational faculties, the first thing he should expect of him would be, that he should fall down and adore him; that he should prostrate himself before him in devout acknowledgment of his obligation and dependence upon him for every endowment which he possessed. And this consideration applies, perhaps, to the sensitive part of human nature above every other, because it forms the chief, or at least the proximate agency, by which the whole machinery of the outward conduct is regulated. The assertion, therefore, under due limitation, is unquestionably true, that it is of more importance that the heart should be brought to a wholesome and salutary state of feeling, than even that the views of the understanding should be rectified; for persons much more frequently act under the influence of the passions and affections, than under the direction of intellect and reason.

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### SECTION III.

#### THE USE OF THE AFFECTIONS ALWAYS RECOGNIZED AND ENFORCED IN SCRIPTURE.

BUT, in illustration of the legitimacy and importance of the Affections as entering into the services of religion, and as a component part of the Christian character, we would further remark, that, in their various modifications, they are recognized, and prominently displayed in every page of Scripture, and under every dispensation of truth. How any man

with the Bible in his hand, and with a professed belief in its statements, and deference to its authority, can proscribe feeling in its strongest, if not wild and extravagant, manifestations from the province of religion; and much more how he can allow himself to treat it with ridicule and unthinking contempt, while it is confined within decent and appropriate bounds; how he can expose his ignorance and destitution of it in expressions of scorn or disgust, directed to those by whom it is realized or inculcated in its genuine and legitimate exercise, we are, indeed, utterly at a loss to understand. It is justly remarked by the late eminent and candid Dr. Paley, that, in religion, the weakest and most puerile superstition is beyond all comparison more reasonable and manly and wise, than utter indifference to all religion, and that the latter feature of character is the most degrading and contemptible that can well enter into the constitution of a human creature. And we do not hesitate to assert, in the spirit of the opinion thus expressed by that great man, that the wildest effervescence, the most fantastic and ill-regulated excesses of feeling, if united with real piety, are infinitely more worthy, not merely of our pardon, but even of our regard, than the impious unconcern, the dead apathy, which betrays a total estrangedness to all feeling, except perhaps that of prejudice and party-spirit, respecting the most awful and stupendous of all questions. It requires no ordinary measure of patience and forbearance to witness, without emotion, the ridicule and scorn thrown upon the purest and most influential vitalities of religion under the name of

enthusiasm, or as embodied by the detractor in some more pungent and appropriate epithet. It would be amusing, if it did not involve painful and melancholy considerations, to observe the self-complacency and pride with which the inflated philosopher descends from the hill of science to express his disgust; the political haranguer turns round upon the arena of contention to utter his vapid jest; the gay sensualist rises from the festive board to pronounce his authoritative verdict; and even the illiterate scorner starts forth in order to fling the common-place sneer, when the question of Christian *experience*, comprising the various ardent and interesting emotions in which it mainly consists, happens to come under their notice. It is striking to see what a legitimate object of sport, if not of more malignant treatment, the merest half-thinker, the most perfect driveller upon every great and important question, deems himself justified in regarding the man, who maintains the necessity, and professes himself not altogether ignorant of the fact of a sublime communion with the Father of his spirit, through the medium of a well-directed exercise of the most powerful and energetic principles of his nature. It is also a remarkable circumstance, how much more disposed mankind in general—we mean the mass of a professedly Christian community—are to live at peace with, and even to give the homage of their respect to men, who manifest a total destitution of all sense of religion apart from ordinary and very imperfect morality, than with those who indicate the slightest weakness or extravagance in the external displays of the religious feelings within

them; how much more venial a fault it is usually regarded to be righteous in too small a measure, in the spiritual sense of the expression, than to be righteous overmuch. The entire absence of all affection upon a matter of all others most calculated, it might have been supposed, to awaken it into its intensest exercise, and to rouse it into the most overpowering force, is easily tolerated, and deemed no derogation from the dignity and respectability of character. But if the stream rise at all above its banks; if it ascend in any degree above its due level; if the outbursts of emotion should occasionally overstep the limits of the coldest and most calculating prudence; if its manifestations should sometimes appear rather eccentric to those who contemplate them with the coldness of indifference; as the celebrated critic of antiquity speaks of the impassioned orator, that he appears to rave and to be little short of mad, when he does not carry along with him the sympathies of his hearers; in such a case the world is in arms. Such indulgence of the sensitive feelings is intolerable. It is a delinquency *dignum cane et angue*.

Let me not be misunderstood; I am not the advocate of extravagance. I would not be an apologist for the violation of the laws of reason and sound sense in their application to the duties and services of religion, as I trust it will sufficiently appear before this inquiry is brought to a close. I am merely stating a fact, which, I fear, too clearly indicates that the prevailing antipathy to the admission of a due admixture of sensitive affection into religion lies

deeper than the head, and is seated in the workings of a strong counter-feeling, which has predominant possession of the heart. The drapery which the religious affections wear is often fantastic. Some of the minor habits of conduct, in which they outwardly exhibit themselves, are frequently, in a high degree, objectionable, and sometimes, through ignorance and weakness, mischievous and absurd. There are humorists in religion, as well as every other department of human character; men who are rather singular than properly original; men who find it easier to pass into the antipodes of ordinary conduct, than rise to the loftier elevations of excellence in the prescriptive range of the community to which they belong. There, doubtless, are cases, in which the cloak of hypocrisy is assumed for the unsullied robe of Christian sincerity. But it is carrying the outrage rather too far upon the fair domain of charity to assume the existence of hypocrisy as the cause, wherever any indications of devout feeling present themselves, just as a quick pulse and a hectic flush upon the countenance are considered as the diagnostics of fever or consumption. It is not for any modes and formalities of religious feeling that I am contending, much less for those singularities displayed in the habits of some classes of professed Christians, the only probable effect of which is to excite the prejudices of those who are, perhaps, incapable of estimating the pure and fervent emotions, of which these external signs are but the inadequate, and sometimes grotesque representatives. But it is for the reality and necessity of deep and genuine exercises of the heart as



constituent elements of vital religion, as founded in the nature of man considered in his relation towards his Creator, and as authorized in the clearest declarations of Scripture, that we are now arguing. It is the impiety and uncharitableness of those who are total strangers to the fear and love of God as feelings of the heart, and would banish every thing that is spiritual in religion out of the range of human character, and would thus produce a darkness, a chillness, a desolation of soul, similar to that which would result from the expulsion of the sun out of the system; it is the ignorance and inconsistency of these men, that we are now exposing. It is a lamentable fact that persons abound in the world, who allow themselves to use the language of mockery and contempt in reference to the deep spiritualities of religion, of whom it might too truly be said that they know neither what they say nor whereof they affirm. And, consequently, they would abstract the half, and in many respects the most important half of humanity, from all connection with the service of the Deity\*.

But if these persons cannot perceive the duty and expediency of Feeling in religion from a view of human nature in its original state; if they have not sufficient compass of mind; if they cannot generalize

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\* The object and design of feeling in religion are stated in the following passage by the Rev. Robert Hall, with his usual accuracy and beauty: "The religious affections and sentiments are, in fact, and were intended to be the *proper antagonist* of sensuality—the great deliverer from the thralldom of the appetites, by opening a spiritual world, and inspiring hopes and fears, and consolations, and joys, which bear no relation to the material and sensible universe." —*Serm. on Infid.*, p. 54.

their conceptions of duty so as to take into the account all the principles of their constitution as it came forth from their Maker's hand, then let them look into the pages of that book, the authority of which they recognize; and will they not, in almost every line, discover either a direct injunction or a plain implication of devout Affection as a component part of religion amidst every variety of circumstances and dispensations?

View, for a moment, the state of our first parents under the paradisaical dispensation. From the very brief intimations which we have respecting their character and employments during that period of their being, we can be at no loss in determining what must have been the prevailing habit of their minds. It was the opinion of Bacon that their work in the garden of Eden, during the short continuance of their innocence, was mainly the work of holy contemplation; for that the earth, prior to the curse, required, comparatively, no cultivation; the growth of every wholesome and nutritious plant being spontaneous and abundant. Although this sentiment may not be literally correct and strictly accordant with the scriptural statement of the occupation assigned to Adam upon his creation, to dress and to keep the garden in which he was placed, yet there can be no doubt that their happiness chiefly consisted in elevated fellowship with God, in a congeniality of spirit, in a pure and sublime communion of soul with Him, whom they knew, as it were, by intuition, and loved as by instinct. Their intellect,

indeed, we have reason to suppose, was but very imperfectly developed. Whatever knowledge they possessed, must have been almost exclusively the result of original implantation, the immediate gift of the Author of their nature, and, in all probability, extended not much beyond the exigencies of their present condition. In what related to the attributes of purity, and holiness, and love in their Creator, and to their own obligations and duties towards Him, their understanding was a lamp of pure and resplendent light; but it was neither expanded by long experience, nor filled with the multiplied details of history and science, as the fruit of extensive investigations into the laws and relations of the universe. And, as the mind was thus free from a variety of complicated ideas, the effect of which is invariably to distract, and frequently to debase, the affections had an opportunity of unfolding themselves with intenser and more direct energy towards their object, and flowed forth in admiration, gratitude, and love, with rapturous and unimpeded force. The atmosphere of Paradise was doubtless the atmosphere of holy and ardent love. There the heart breathed its aspirations in accents of the purest and most hallowed affection, and the knee bent in adoration, as the homage of a grateful mind. The air was fragrant with divine love; and every gale wafted upward on its wing the melody of thanksgiving and praise.

Thus the Affections of the heart entered as component parts into religion, and indeed, as we may fairly assume from the scriptural representation, con-

stituted the principal ingredients in the character of man, under the original economy of his nature, while yet in a state of innocence.

But let us pass on to the varied forms of that grand Dispensation, which was divinely established for him, as a fallen and corrupt being, and which was gradually developed in an order of distinct succession, until it was completed and consummated in the introduction of Christianity into the world. Let us cross the dark gulf of the fall, and survey the character of religion, as exhibited in the incipient light, in the primary evolution of the covenant of grace, under the form of the patriarchal dispensation. During this early period, that portion of divine truth, which had survived the ruins of the fall, was kept alive by tradition, to which the remarkable longevity of the first inhabitants of the world very materially contributed. It was, however, but a glimmering and straggling light. It shone but very partially and imperfectly, like that which issues through the interstices of a lantern in a dark night. The mind of man, in his fallen state, is an earthen vessel, in which the treasure of heavenly truth can be but very imperfectly preserved. Moreover, the knowledge of God, and of the great method of restoration to his favour, was yet vouchsafed but in a very small measure to the world. But even amidst all these disadvantages, even in this dawn of divine knowledge and truth, we find instances of such affectionate zeal, of such warmth of devotion, of such energy of piety, as demonstrate with sufficient clearness, that religion was not an alien from the heart; that it was not a cold

lunar reflection; but a beam of light and heat proceeding immediately from Him, who is the central Sun of the universe. Of Enoch it is said, that he walked with God, an expression, which, if applied in its genuine import to the character—indeed, if employed as descriptive of the general habits and conduct of an individual under the resplendent light of even the Christian Dispensation, would by many be regarded as involving the quintessence of enthusiasm, if not of absurdity and folly. To walk with God, as the phrase was designative of the character of that holy patriarch, implies not merely the obedience of the outward conduct, not merely the practical observance of the law; but also the intimacy of holy friendship, the communion of the soul with a God, who graciously condescends to hold intercourse with it; the interchange of the tenderest affections, the maintenance of a fellowship with Heaven, to which the world is a stranger, and compared to which its pleasures are but empty gratifications. And if the expression was inadequate, the result proves the amount of its meaning; for when Enoch had thus walked with God, we are told that he was not, for God took him. Thus Jehovah testifies his regard for such extraordinary devotion, and set the seal of his authority, even at that early period, upon the obligation and importance of a cordial surrender of the Affections unto Him, and of a life distinguished by close converse with Him.

The same truth is illustrated, with more or less clearness, in the characters of Noah, of Abraham, of Lot, and of the patriarchs in general. To the

second of these eminent saints, Jehovah himself immediately addresses a language similar to that which had been used in reference to Enoch, "Walk thou before the Lord." He is also called the "Friend of God." In the brief accounts which we have of these persons, indeed, the more ordinary phraseology employed as expressive of the various acts of their conduct, is, that they did as the Lord commanded them. But even these statements do most emphatically prove the existence of devout Feelings in their hearts. When it is asserted by the Apostle, that to love God is to keep His commandments, he does not mean completely to resolve the former part of the proposition in the latter; he does not intend to affirm that the love of God is absolutely and identically the keeping of His commandments, so that the Feeling is absolutely annihilated, and no where exists but as it is embodied in the act. Such a notion is calculated to convey, and, we fear, frequently has conveyed, a most erroneous impression; so that a decent observance of some of the most palpable injunctions of the moral law is taken by many persons to include all that is necessarily required in loving God. Whereas, the statement of the Apostle, properly understood, really implies the greater strength and intensity of this affection as a Feeling of the heart. His design is to establish an inseparable connection between the affection and the action, between the heart and the life. His meaning is, that wherever the love of God is really possessed, and exerts a predominant influence in the mind, it is impossible it should not manifest itself in keeping



God's commandments. The consequence of this train of argument is, that to profess to love God, without a corresponding regard to his law, is hypocrisy ; and to make a show of keeping His commandments, where His love is not really shed abroad in the heart, and acts not as the moving spring of the conduct, is Pharisaism.

The introduction of the Mosaic or Levitical system of religious worship was an important step in advance towards the full development of the covenant of redemption. At the establishment of this dispensation, a most important portion of divine truth was embodied in written records. The knowledge, which was lost at the fall, or was obscured in its transition through the corrupt channels of human tradition, was, in a great measure, restored through the medium of infallible inspiration. The veil, which time had thrown over the cosmogony of the present system of things, and the history of its earliest state, was removed. The mournful fact, which brought sin and its attendant woe into the world, was clearly announced. The effects of the fall were stated, and the gracious method by which the most dreadful of those effects was capable of being averted, was hinted with a clearness, and symbolized with a distinctness of representation, which were sufficient to form the basis of a saving faith. The character of God was unfolded in the precepts of that moral law, which was the measure of his will, as it regarded mankind, and the very image and transcript of his nature.

With this increase of light, and with these superior advantages, it might have been expected that

the leading features of that religion, which Jehovah designed for man as the medium of acceptably serving and enjoying himself, would be more clearly displayed. We consequently witness an evident advance of character in the general aspect of pious Feeling. Religion is more fully appreciated as a matter of the heart, and as a service offered unto Him, who regards not so much the views and speculations of the understanding, as the attitude of the spirit and affections, indispensably required to evince itself, indeed, in the uniform obedience of the life. How frequently do we find a due and appropriate exercise of the Feelings inculcated in the writings of Moses. And though the dispensation, which he was appointed to establish, was in a great measure a dispensation of types and external emblems, yet how obviously does it appear that, without a congenial habit of Affection in the inner man of the heart, no observances however precise, no rites of service however duly performed, no piacular sacrifices however costly, could be of any avail in the propitiation of the divine favour. Nor is it merely the necessity of sincerity, of a state of mind accordant with the ostensible acts of the conduct, that stands forth with prominence in the pages of the Old Testament. But we find there a current of devout feelings, and occasional ebullitions of holy affection, which not only demonstrate the point which we are now discussing, as related to that economy, but stamp a character of the most exalted spirituality upon the individuals in whom they were displayed. Let any man peruse the Psalms of David, the mystic

odes of Solomon, and the animated effusions of the prophets, in each of which the very soul of feeling seems to breathe, and let him doubt whether the Affections even in their most energetic vigour, were excluded from the dispensation, to which these eminent and highly favoured persons belonged. The first of these compositions have always been regarded by the Christian Church as the most suitable channels through which the heart of devotion, whether distressed by guilt, overwhelmed by calamity, dismayed by fear, glowing with love, cheered by hope, or exulting in the triumphs of faith, could discharge the plenitude of its high-wrought and overburdened emotions. By a prescient adaptation they appear to have been in a manner designed for the expression of feelings which would be called forth under a future economy. They seem, in some instances, to be more suited to the raptures of heaven, and more proper to be chanted by the lips of a seraph, or to be set to the harp of an archangel, than to embody the thoughts and affections of a mortal sojourning upon earth.

Need we pass on to the Christian Dispensation to evince the same fact? In this, as the consummation to which all previous systems of religious worship were designed to be preparatory; as the fruit, of which those that preceded it were but the germinating principle in its various stages of development,—it might have been expected that the operations of divine truth, as it relates to the character of man, would be more fully disclosed. The scaffolding, which surrounded the Temple during the

gradual process of its erection, was now to be taken down, and the interior of the structure to be thrown open in all its beauty and utility. The Gospel is eminently a dispensation of the Spirit. The vast and diversified apparatus, which was brought into action in the performance of the services of the law, was now removed as a useless and cumbersome appendage. It now became more distinctly recognized that religion is not a mere affair of the understanding and of outward action, but that its principles have their chief seat in the heart, and must be intimately interwoven with all the chords of Feeling. There is not a single affection; there is not one inmate of the human breast, being a genuine element of the original nature of man, which is not represented in the New Testament as entering, in some form or other, into the constitution of the Christian character. Those, which are base and evil, the whole order of sinful and malignant passions, the code of Christ requires to be totally renounced and eradicated. Those, which are of an opposite description, which are elevating in their nature and sanctifying in their influence, it demands as a sacrifice to be offered up on the altar of Jehovah. Warm and impassioned feeling was no less a prominent feature exemplified in the character of St. Paul himself, than it forms a main and principal point in that discipline of the heart, which his Epistles so admirably delineate. Holy sentiments and affections he places among the fruits of the Spirit; and so far from allowing the heart to sink into torpor and insensibility, he takes every opportunity to arouse it into liveliest energy

and to kindle it into an intenser flame. The whole import of the book of inspiration, indeed, as it respects the heart, may be embodied in these brief but emphatic exhortations of this eminent Apostle—"Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." "Set your Affections on things above, and not on things upon the earth."

Thus we have the exercise of the Affections clearly recognized, exemplified, and, in many instances, forcibly inculcated throughout the whole compass of Revelation, and under every economy of religion which God hath vouchsafed unto man.

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#### SECTION IV.

SENSITIVE AFFECTION NECESSARY, IN ORDER THAT RELIGION MAY PRODUCE ITS PROPER EFFECT UPON THE CHARACTER.

THE next observation relative to the warrant and expediency of sensitive Affection in religion, which we propose to make, is, that *such Emotions of heart are indispensably necessary to give divine truth its legitimate influence and effect upon the character.* It is one of the first principles of our nature, a principle continually verified by experience, and abundantly recognized in Scripture, that the habits of the conduct should take their colour and prevailing cast from the predominant affections of the heart. It is an injunction of one of the wisest of men and the most illustrious of monarchs, of one whose comprehensive and sagacious mind had compassed the whole circle and penetrated the profoundest depths

of human knowledge, and who, in all his investigations, carried with him the lamp of divine illumination, "Keep thy Heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." It is asserted by the same inspired writer, that whatever "a man thinketh in his Heart, so is he." It is possible indeed, that a train of actions may be entered upon in the life, bearing the appearance of an immediate and direct derivation from the genuine source of the heart; there may be excitements from without sufficient to produce an occasional and temporary effect, while the spring of permanent motion lies wholly dormant and inactive—as an external impulse given to the pendulum of a clock, which had stood still, will put it for a while in motion, and urge forward the minute hand, even though the requisite weights should have fallen down, or the machinery have been out of order. Or as Virgil describes the contest of the galleys—the Trojan regatta, when a powerful stroke had been given, such was the accelerating force thus imparted, that, for a time, any further effort was needless, "*Fert impetus ipse.*" It is possible, also, that such mounds may be raised by pride or self-interest as that the streams of conduct should be diverted from their genuine tendency, and be forced into channels the very opposite of those, to which they originally were propelled. But such causes are unnatural, artificial, and transitory in their operation. When they cease to operate, the effects disappear, and a reaction follows, which throws the character backward into a state of more hopeless supineness and inactivity, or carries it into more



dangerous and ruinous extremities in a line of contrary direction. The hue of florid bloom which is not the result of the healthful and spontaneous operations of unforced nature, which does not arise from the crimson tide issuing forth from its salient point in the heart, will soon give place to an aspect of sickly paleness and withering decay. Or, if we may be allowed the illustration, by providing a moral apparatus of pistons and valves, and other requisite articles, you may pump some portion of muddy water out of the system of the worldly and unrenewed heart, but a wholesome and never-failing supply can be yielded only from the fountain of that heart, which is become a well of salvation, a spring of living water. It is only from this exhaustless source that the issues of the divine life can flow forth to feed the plants of righteousness—the evergreens in the garden of the Lord.

That the Heart and Affections should be engaged and powerfully interested on the side of truth, in order that religion may produce its due effect upon the character, is equally necessary for the prevention of evil, and the production of active, positive good. What is the design of Christianity as it regards the present conduct of man? Was it not intended to actuate and control his whole character—to arouse his energies into a vigorous and salutary operation—to restrain every irregular impulse, and to check the overflowings of iniquity? Was it not intended to infuse a renovating and transforming influence into the whole system, to *work*, as it were, the whole machinery of the outer and inner man; to bend the

stubborn power of the Will; to rectify the perverse obliquities of the judgment; and to bring down every high and lofty thing, every ambitious and aspiring aim of an unhallowed imagination into captivity to the obedience of Christ?

We will assume then that Christianity was designed by its divine Author to exercise this subordinating control over the faculties of the human mind, and the habits of human conduct. But how is this dominant authority to be acquired, and this universality of influence to be exerted? If the remedial principles of the Gospel are to meet the human character at every point, to spread by a kind of superposition over the whole extent of its moral being, so far as to produce an assimilating effect upon every part, how can this object be accomplished otherwise than by the application of an adequate and appropriate influence to every element, of which it is composed? The blindness of the understanding is to be removed by the introduction of the light of heaven into the mind through the renovated organs of the Reason. The errors of the judgment and the conscience must be rectified by a clear and convincing development of the truth. But the Heart is an organ of a different construction, and its disorders must be obviated by a remedy congenial to its own nature. The heart is the centre of the affections, and the affections are the animating and all-pervading principles of the conduct. To meet the irregularities and excesses of the latter, they must be encountered in the former. Here demonstration is not sufficient, for reasoning addresses itself to another department

of human nature, and however necessary as a groundwork, however useful as an auxiliary, yet as the instrument of sanctification and conversion it is of itself wholly inadequate. Thousands in the face of the most imminent peril, and in spite of the most powerful array of argument, have rushed headlong into sin and destruction with this confession ready to break forth from their lips—

————— video meliora proboque,  
Deteriora sequor.

The strong man armed is too closely barricadoed to be expelled by the weapons of dry logic. The Leviathan of human corruption will not retire at the shaking of such powerless spears. His scales are impenetrable to such puny armour, and he laughs to scorn the attempt by such means, unaccompanied by a mightier and more direct assault, to dislodge him from his position. When the heart is encased in spiritual insensibility; when daring impiety and reckless passion burn within, and send forth a poisonous exhalation of irreligion and vice,—to oppose the deductions of reason, and the speculations of airy imagination to such a malignant and overwhelming force of evil, would be just as efficacious as a sprinkling of water from a fire-engine to extinguish the flames of Etna, or the erection of a mound of glass-work to stop the torrent of Vesuvius. So impotent is Reason, whatever may be its necessity, its energy, and its efficiency, in convincing the understanding, when required to control the actions of a man, whose heart is a volcano, where the discordant elements of passion work in continual tumult, and

the mouth of whose conduct is a crater discharging an everlasting supply of every thing that is noxious and destructive.

But it does not require such extreme and incorrigible wickedness as these expressions and illustrations will appear to many to imply, to render the co-operation of the strongest Feelings of the heart indispensably necessary to give religion its due effect upon the character. The late Mr. Fox, it will be allowed by all, without any reference to his political opinions or moral character, was a profound observer of human nature. He was naturally a man of philosophic mind, and had witnessed the development of general principles, as they affected the conduct of mankind, with an accuracy which, in matters of practical and intellectual investigation, must attach considerable weight to his sentiments. When there was a motion before parliament, the object of which was to remove the disabilities of a certain class of professed Christians, whose principles were of a rather obnoxious character, this eminent statesman remarked, in the course of his speech, and argued at some length, that men's *speculative opinions*, whatever they may be, are of very little consequence, for it is an obvious and well-known fact that they seldom affect the conduct in a very great degree. Whether, therefore, the theoretical notions of these persons were right or wrong, it did not appear to him that they would be either better or worse members of the community.

Although we are ready to acquiesce in the cor-

rectness of these observations, as far as they tend to show the inadequacy of speculative notions to exert any powerful influence upon the conduct, while they continue to float as abstract theories or visionary phantoms in the head, and do not become incorporated into any feeling of the heart; yet it by no means follows, and we desire most distinctly to disavow the mischievous and absurd idea, that men are in no respect accountable for their opinion. This subject we have already discussed at some length in a former part of this work; but such do we deem to be the importance belonging to it in the present state of public opinion, that we cannot help subjoining the following observations in addition to what has been already stated. It is at this moment a current maxim in certain circles of literature and politics, that, in the formation of his opinions, man is perfectly passive—that, in the views which he adopts, even upon the most important points of the most important of all questions, he is a necessary agent, and that he is no more responsible for his belief or disbelief of religious truth, than he is for the colour of his skin or the form of his visual organs. According to this theory of opinions, the most confirmed atheist, provided he does not violate the laws of the State in the promulgation of his sentiments, is as innocent a man as the devoutest and most practical believer in the doctrines of the New Testament; and whatever may be wrong in his creed, or rather his no-creed, it is, forsooth, his misfortune and not his fault. The only feeling, therefore, with which his charac-

ter is to be regarded, is that of pity and not condemnation. We are ready to acknowledge, indeed, that we are bound to pity the worst of criminals,—that we have no right to triumph in malignant disdain or hate over the most abandoned of the species. The salutary memento, “who made thee to differ,” ought always to repress every such tendency. That infidelity and profaneness, confined within the limits of decency, ought to be visited by penal laws, and considered amenable at the bar of human judicature, we do not affirm. The expediency of legal prosecution, on the ground of infidel opinions, except in cases of peculiar aggravation, may be fairly questioned. But it by no means follows that the maintenance of such sentiments involves no moral guilt, and is regarded with no abhorrence by Him, whose very being, so clearly imaged forth in the mirror of nature, and whose character and attributes, so distinctly portrayed and so strikingly demonstrated upon the page of revelation, are thus outraged. Before Jehovah can witness such intellectual conduct with complacence, He must be considered as willing to deny Himself, and to expose Himself to the reflection, that in the two volumes of nature and revelation, where He intended that his creatures should read his existence and purposes, He has supplied them with proofs, which are inadequate to convince an honest and sincere inquirer. It is the merest sophistry to affirm, in reference to this subject, that a man cannot command his convictions—that he must believe or disbelieve, according to the evidence which the



subject appears to him inherently to possess. In mathematical science, indeed, and in the immediate exercise of the senses, assent is compulsory. To dispute the fact demonstrated or perceived would be irrational. In matters of complicated investigation, where the proofs are insufficient, and where the passions and interests of the inquirer are in nowise concerned, he may innocently err in estimating what may appear to him the preponderating side of the question. But in an affair which is partly moral and partly intellectual, and the decision of which rests as much with the heart as with the understanding, it is obvious that the case is widely different. Supposing that there is a strong previous bias to one side of the question—that a powerful array of passions consolidated into standing habits is ranged on the negative; supposing that the individual, in consequence of former actions or present tendencies and predilections, deems himself deeply concerned to prove the reverse of the proposed system, and that his hopes and fears, while he continues what he is, are leagued in confederacy against its reception, will any one maintain that, under these circumstances, he is an impartial and competent judge of the question, and that, with perfect innocence, he can pronounce against evidence, however strong, and thus undermine the very basis of a scheme of conduct, however imperatively enjoined by One, who had a right to command it? Will it be maintained that moral proof will be *allowed* its real weight by one, whose perceptions are subject to these deteriorating and

pervverting influences, and that the inclination of a judgment thus soaked in passion and saturated with prejudice is totally free from moral turpitude? The measure of guilt involved in such a determination of the mind will bear a strict proportion to the magnitude of the consequences liable to result from it, and to the complexional shade, which it must necessarily give to the whole of the future conduct.

Now we affirm that this is precisely the state of the case, when a man of vicious habits, or bloated with vanity and conceit, undertakes, perhaps with very scanty qualifications of intellect, as well as utter inaptitude of heart, to examine the evidences of revealed religion. With him the question is already prejudged in the court of highest influence, in the areopagus of the affections. It is his interest, according to his perverted view of it, that the whole of that glorious and transcendent system should be fabulous, and that he should walk abroad in all the unaccountableness of licentious freedom, or intellectual pride. It was remarked by the late Dr. Beattie, and we think in perfect accordance with the most philosophical views of human nature, as related to the point we are now discussing, that no good man ever undertook to examine the Christian religion, but he found the religion to be true, and its evidences satisfactory. But where the qualities of the moral being are defective, or wholly wanting, which are necessary to conduct the inquiry with success, where the very organs of perception, if we may so speak, are wholly vitiated and disordered, it is no wonder, with whatever clearness

and transparency the light may shine, that such darkness should comprehend it not. Then is realized the truth of the distich—

Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,  
And these reciprocally those again.

The guilt of infidelity, as a system of disbelief, lies not in the opinions which it entertains, abstractedly considered, for the intellect, as an operative faculty, is as incapable of guilt as the common organs of sense; but in the state of the heart and affections, which, by their reaction, impose such a mass of impiety and absurdity upon an understanding too grovelling or perverse to resist its force.

We have thought it necessary to guard thus strongly against the conclusion liable to be deduced from the comparative dormancy of speculative opinions, as it respects an efficient influence upon the conduct; as if it was, therefore, a matter of utter indifference, and involving no moral principle, no question of innocence or guilt, what opinions were held or rejected. Although the purest sentiments, and an assent to the most scriptural tenets, while they continue to float in all the vagueness of intellectual notions, are wholly useless and unavailing in the regulation of the character; yet so much the more powerful and spontaneous is the tendency of human nature to evil than to that which is good, that there is a much closer connection between profane speculations in the understanding, and impious habits in the life, than there is between the purest notional principles, and the corresponding practical results. In the former case,

the passage from the understanding to the heart, and from the heart to the life, is short and easy; while, in the latter, it is formed of the steepest acclivities, and is divided by immeasurable intervals\*. The match requires only to be applied to some chymical compositions, to kindle into a flame; but tinder, in order to produce the same effect, must be set on fire by sparks actually struck out of the flint.

It is this strong disinclination of the human mind to the practice of Christian duty, that renders it indispensably necessary that all the feelings of the heart should be powerfully engaged on the side of truth. In all other pursuits of importance, indeed, they are the Affections in their diversified and endless modifications, which prove the grand stimulants to action. Without the aid of these vigorous incentives, the weightiest undertakings of mankind would fall into a state of torpor and inactivity. The machine of state would be unable to move amidst the cumbersome appendages with which it is clogged, and the wheels of business, in its most enterprising departments, would stand still. What would be the effect in the political and commercial world, if the sensitive part of human nature was to be paralyzed, and the busy stir of the passions was to sink into motionless quiescence? What would become of the energetic

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\* Chez la plupart des Chrétiens il y a bien loin de la profession à la croyance, de la croyance à la conviction, et de la conviction à la pratique.—MONTESQUIEU.

measures of the statesman, the generous enthusiasm of the patriot, and of the sleepless activity of the various orders of mercantile projectors, if every thing within those comprehensive departments of human labour, was to be reduced into the axioms of political economy, and the dry rules of trade? What would become of the resistless impetus, which urges forward the hero in the prosecution of his martial achievements, and in the legitimate career of victory, if every thing that is exciting and spirit-stirring in his character, was to be sobered down to the tameness and inertness of the disciplinary tactics of war? What is it that awakens the energy and kindles the ardent devotion of these several performers upon the theatre of human action, but their love of fame, their love of glory, their love of their country, or, if we may be allowed to translate the language of declamation into that of simple fact, in many cases, their love of themselves, and the fear of the opposite to what they desire? Let these respective characters, who may be considered as the representatives of all that is most active and influential among mankind be divested of those passions and affections which are as it were the elements of motivity in their nature; let them go forth clad in the dull armoury of the mechanical regulations and principles of their professions; and what will they be but so many shadows of existence, so many forms of humanity, in which the spark of vitality was extinct?

It is true that, in all these cases, principles and axioms are necessary,—that they are a *sine qua non*

in every individual instance. It is true that there is a system of rules connected with every branch of activity, which must be understood and adopted; it is true that, without their adoption as a basis, it is impossible to advance a single step with security and success—that they are the very rudder which keeps the vessel in its due course, or the very ballast by which its equipoise is preserved. But, in addition to this, there is wanted an actuating power, without which principles of belief, however correct, are but combinations of language or metaphysical abstractions, vague, visionary, and unsubstantial. Axioms of truth, however firm and valid, are but a fulcrum, resting upon which, the agency of the affections may be called into exercise. They are (to change the figure) but the veins and arteries of a system, through which it is the function of the heart to propel and circulate the current which gives life and energy to the whole frame. And if, to all other pursuits and undertakings of importance, it would be fatal to extinguish that powerful flame which, on necessary occasions, sets the whole world of the human soul on fire; if love, and hope, and fear, in their most intense exercise, are necessary to give effect to every plan that is to be carried on upon a great scale and amidst many difficulties; if it would be a mutilation of the human character to cut these off from their appropriate share of influence in every other department; with what imaginable propriety can they be excluded from the arduous and all-important business of religion? Will a set of cold and speculative dogmas, like so



many wedges mechanically lodged in the grooves of the understanding, send forth a life-giving and transforming influence throughout the whole character? Will an order of opinions, which claim no sympathy with the heart, with which no chord of feeling sounds in unison, be effectual in securing that universality of obedience, that devoted self-denial, that complete self-surrender to the will of God, that active and uniform resistance to the power of evil, that total and unreserved renunciation of every sinful habit, however inveterate it may have grown, and however interwoven with the very stamina of the mental constitution, that prompt and steady abandonment of every pursuit which is inconsistent with the obligations of religion, however sanctioned by custom and authority, and however conducive to immediate gratification or interest, that alacrity of purpose, that energy of zeal, that assiduity of diligence in the service of God, that living sacrifice in short of the whole man, that entire dedication of every corporeal and mental endowment—of every physical power and of every intellectual faculty unto His cause and the promotion of His glory, which Christianity so evidently demands? To remove or to invalidate the use and importance of sensitive affection in the formation or development of the Christian character, is a sophistry in moral science. It is like removing the middle term in a syllogistic process: it is to snap asunder the connecting link between premise and conclusion in the practical logic of religion. For the affections are the middle term between the

understanding and the outward conduct, without which either limb of the syllogism would be destitute of all validity and force. Let the heart sink into apathy, and the strings of feeling cease to vibrate, and feebleness and inefficacy will instantly characterize the operations of the intellect, however luminous its views and however firm its grasp, with respect to that influence which it is required to exert upon the life. The conduct can no more exhibit the regular evolution of the Christian graces and virtues, than a wheel can turn around its axis and produce the distant and complicated results in which it was designed to be the most effective agent, when the motive power has been withdrawn.

The records of history invariably speak the same language, and conspire in confirming and illustrating the same important truth. They tend universally to demonstrate that, although, unaccompanied by clear and sound and manly views of divine truth strong feelings must of necessity run into fanaticism and superstition; yet without these feelings in their due and well-regulated operation, zealous and energetic piety cannot exist, either isolated in the character of individuals or embodied in the habits of a people. Whenever the faith and hope suggested by the Gospel have ceased to be living principles of the heart, and have floated upward into the head, like deteriorated air ascending towards the upper galleries of a crowded room in consequence of having been deprived of its vital and respirable qualities, it has been found that the laws of genuine Christianity have ceased to bear

sway, that zeal for its propagation has vanished, that indifference respecting its grand essentials as a redeeming and saving scheme has prevailed, and a system of baseless morality, if not of gross licentiousness, at best a species of refined heathenism, has been substituted in its stead. Whenever, on the contrary, the great truths of Christianity have been appreciated as facts, and felt as realities, the effect has been manifest in the character and conduct of those who professed it. Of this we cannot have a more striking proof than that which is supplied by the celebrated historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, a witness who will not be suspected of attributing too much to the power of faith. In his account of the early progress of Christianity, and in his list of causes which, according to his view, sufficiently explain the unrivalled rapidity of growth which distinguished that oppressed and persecuted religion, he brings it forward as a very prominent and influential circumstance, that the Faith of the believers at that time appears to have been formed of much stronger materials than that of professors of later ages; that those primitive Christians *felt* the full force of all that they believed, and that consequently the principles of the Gospel had their full effect upon their conduct; that the realizing impressions which they had of the affairs of another world were so powerfully influential upon their character, that they counted no sacrifice too great to make, no efforts too laborious to exert, no sufferings too dreadful to encounter, if thereby they could in any measure

advance the interest of the truth which they had so deeply at heart.

Such is the substance of the argument advanced by this eminent but sceptical historian, while he is endeavouring to form an array of causes for the amazing and almost instantaneous spread of Christianity throughout the Roman empire, sufficiently strong to keep at a distance the main power, or even any auxiliary force, which was supplied from another world. The fact which he asserts, of the mighty energy of feeling with which the speculative truths of the Gospel were at that time accompanied, is unquestionable; but the inference which he deduces from this, in connection with other causes, to the exclusion of a miraculous power going forth with the first promulgation of the Gospel, is futile and unsatisfactory.

We may go on to assert that the decay of this deep and affectionate earnestness has always been attended with a correspondent decay in the principles and practice of religion. When the heart ceased to beat, a torpid quiescence began to spread through the frame, and a hue of death to mark the whole system, and unless the organ of vital circulation had again been roused into action by a super-human power, the speedy result would have been mortification and utter dissolution. Revivals in religion, therefore, have always been attended with the prevalence of deep and impassioned feelings, sometimes, through the agency of the evil one taking advantage of human weakness and ignorance, running into much extravagance and folly. But still

it is an unquestionable fact that no great revivals, no important reformations of great and inveterate abuses ever have taken place without the operation of strong and high-wrought feeling. While the heart is unconcerned, no one thinks it worth while to disturb his own peace, and, perhaps, to endanger his own life by agitating the stagnant pool, where so many pestilential ingredients lie deposited. The passions may sometimes, indeed, be unduly fermented, and gain vent by improper outlets, but this is only the effervescence of a principle, which, in its permanent results, is productive of salubrity and strength.

For an illustration of these remarks, look to the reformation in Germany. Contrast the characters of Luther and Erasmus, as leading agents in the effectuation or retardation of that great event. In their doctrinal views, except in a few important points indeed, they do not appear so very widely to have differed. In the acknowledgment of the necessity of an ecclesiastical reformation they entirely agreed. Erasmus saw this as clearly as Luther. But the difference was this—they felt not alike. Luther had such a deep and ever present impression of the importance of this measure, and of the revival of the pure doctrines of Scripture to the salvation of immortal souls, that he counted nothing dear unto him, by the sacrifice of which he might attain his object. He was anxious to heave from its very foundation that enormous mass of tyranny and superstition, under which the human mind, like the fabled giant under *Ætna*, had groaned

and struggled for so many ages. Whereas Erasmus, possessed of the richest stores of erudition, and for a long period commanding a wider influence, dared not manfully to put forth his arm. His heart was not in the matter. It weighed not upon his mind with a sense of overwhelming importance, and therefore the whole of his conduct, in reference to that salutary convulsion of the seat of the papal beast, is one scene of temporizing policy and shuffling hesitation. He was afraid, on the one hand, to avow and patronize with openness what his understanding obliged him, in the main, to approve; and afraid on the other to offend the power, upon whose good pleasure his honour and elevation seemed to depend. His intellect, however brilliant, failed to communicate an adequate measure of moral energy and impetus to arouse the fatal indifference to the interests of pure religion, which rested like a sheet of lead upon his heart.

The consequence was, that while Luther, urged forward by the noble and devout enthusiasm of his feelings, and accompanied by a band of congenial associates, among whom the illustrious Melancthon stood foremost, marched on in the career of victory over the powers of spiritual darkness, Erasmus followed, like a timid and discontented warrior behind his car. While the profound and elegant scholar of Rotterdam loitered between the hostile camps of Popery and Protestantism, admired for his learning and knowledge by all, but respected for his consistency by none, a memorable instance of the inadequacy of what, on the whole, may be considered



as speculative orthodoxy, to give effect to the principles of religion, the Saxon Reformer, with talents less cultivated, but with his heart and affections more deeply engaged in the work, was made instrumental in the hand of God in establishing an era in the history of the human mind, compared with which the philosophical revolutions effected by Bacon and Newton and Locke, were insignificant events. The petty disturbances occasioned by his slight indiscretions, and some undue outburstings of feeling, of which he was guilty, have passed away and are forgotten, like the surf in a rough sea thrown up by the keel of a vessel gallantly riding into harbour, while the benefits of his inestimable labours are felt to the extremities of the globe, and are prominently embodied in the habits and religious institutions of almost every country in Europe.

The same observations might be made relative to those revivals of religion, which at different periods have taken place in Great Britain and America; but to no epoch in the history of the Church, perhaps, with more propriety, than to that noble and well regulated enthusiasm, by which the nations of the world, and our own country in particular, seem to have been lately roused to disseminate the knowledge, and to impart the saving efficacy of the Gospel, throughout every region of the globe. This is no unholy crusade, which clothes itself in steel, breathes out slaughter and revenge, and calls forth one set of angry passions into murderous array against another, but it is one simultaneous movement of the army of the Prince of Peace, distinguished,

indeed, into different battalions, and clad in different uniforms, but yet united together in bonds of brotherly love; bearing no weapons but the panoply of heavenly truth, and the sword of the eternal Spirit; carrying on no war but that of kindness and affectionate persuasion against ignorance, and superstition, and misery; and exhibiting in its triumphant progress no scenes of carnage and of blood, but the affecting emblems of the broken body and of the shed blood of that Lamb of God, which was slain for the sins of the world.

We can trace this mighty stir in the camp of Israel in all its wide-spread departments, ramifications, and divisions, only to a cause, which had for a long time lain quiescent,—a deep-felt conviction of the importance of religion in general, and of its necessity to every individual of mankind in particular. Nothing short of this, no clear perceptions of the mind, no demonstrations adduced unto and recognised by the intellect could have given such a powerful impulse to the community, and clothed the Gospel with such energy with respect to its influence upon individual character, and upon the state of the world at large. It follows that sensitive Feeling in religion is not only legitimate, but indispensably necessary, inasmuch as it is the parent of zeal, and the fertile source of every thing that is great and heroic in the annals of Christian achievement.

## SECTION V.

THE EXERCISE OF THE AFFECTIONS—A CHIEF CONSTITUENT OF  
THE HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN.

IN illustration of the legitimacy and importance of devout Feeling as an element of the Christian character, we would finally remark, that from all the intimations of Scripture, and from all that reason and the consideration of the nature and character of man can suggest, we have grounds to believe that the exercise of holy Affection will constitute a very principal ingredient, if not the main substance of the *blessedness of heaven*. It is generally admitted that the present world was designed to be a probationary scene, a school of intellectual and mental discipline, to prepare the soul for the enjoyments and occupations of her future destiny. Religion is the instrument, the grand agent, by which this work is to be carried on, and the whole process realized. So far, therefore, as we can ascertain from our varied sources of information the nature of those sublime employments, and of those transcendent felicities, which are reserved for the righteous hereafter, in the same proportion can we form accurate ideas of the distinguishing features of true religion as it stands connected with the character here below. It may be assumed as an unquestionable point, as the groundwork of all our views upon this subject, that whatever original capacities belong to the human mind will not be extinguished or annihilated in

heaven, but rectified from every obliquity, purified from every stain, and gradually developed to an order of still higher maturity and perfection. If this world is a nursery, in the distant soil of which the tender plants of human nature are to be reared up for a while, until they are removed to a warmer clime and a richer paradise, it may be necessary to prune them of their superfluous branches, and to separate from them the fungous excrescences, which the unhealthy atmosphere around them, or the disorder which has crept into them may occasion, but the very elements of their being, the organizing principles of their life and growth are still to remain, and only to be strengthened and directed in order to be meet for the situation, which they are hereafter intended to occupy. And as we have shown that sensitive Affection is an original and essential part of the mental constitution of man, it would be against every analogy of nature—to say nothing of the declarations of Scripture—to imagine that it will not expand into more vigorous energies amidst the transporting scenes of futurity.

Heaven is universally represented in Scripture as a place, not so much of intense and laborious thinking, as of sublime and rapturous feeling. And nothing appears to us more strongly to prove, more fully to demonstrate the futility and unscriptural character of that religion, which is confined to the cold speculations of intellect, or the formalities of a professed creed and a bodily service than this, its utter want of all congeniality with the functions, to which it ought to be the preparative. Unless, there-

fore, we transform the heaven of the Scriptures into the Elysium of heathenism, and with Virgil admit the warrior, the equestrian, and the huntsman, to follow in it the diversions and occupations in which they took their chief delight upon earth, it is impossible that they should have any meetness for its pure pleasures, and its exalted society, who are total strangers to all those ardent affections, to all those spiritualities of feeling, which are implied in the expressive, but to them mystic and unintelligible phraseology of fellowship and communion with God. We mean not to say that in heaven the understanding will be unemployed, and that there will be no active duties. Such a notion would hardly suit that more perfect economy to which we are taught to look forward,—an economy under which all the powers of man will have scope for their full and unrestrained development. But we maintain, that a feeling of exquisite delight will accompany every act; that all the faculties of the understanding, all the affections of the heart, all the activities of the conduct, whatever may be their spiritual direction, will, in a manner, be absorbed in love. Every lesser light, every subordinate movement, will be lost in the splendour, and yield to the predominating influence of that central sun in the firmament of the glorified character.

The happiness of the servants of God in a future world has been represented by St. Paul, as resulting from a perpetual enjoyment of his exalted presence and society. “And they shall be ever with the Lord.” With a view of illustrating the blessedness

of the saints, and of showing the important share which the affections will have in the fruition of that blessedness, we shall consider the privilege of being ever with the Lord as embracing various particulars. So highly did the apostle estimate this privilege, that he regarded it as the crown and perfection of happiness, as the sum total of human good, as rising to a height and extending to an amplitude of enjoyment, beyond which desire cannot soar, and the faculties cannot expand.

1. The saints, therefore, after the consummation of the present order of things, shall be with God, first, in the participation of his glory. In various points of view they may be said to have been with him during their probationary state of being. In respect of the ubiquity of his essence, of the universality of his presence, they could not at any time be otherwise than with him. Even during their state of estrangement and pilgrimage upon earth, they were with him, still resting under the shadow of his protection. They were with him in the experience of his fatherly care and guidance, in the frequent realization of the tokens of his favour and love, in the observance of his law, in the duties of his service, in the ordinances of his sanctuary. They were with him in the devout study of his character, in the contemplation of his attributes, in the reverential adoration of his perfections, in the glow of ardent gratitude, in the warmth of holy love, in the visions of faith, in the anticipations of hope, and in the longing desire of an entire conformity to his image, and of an immediate admission into his presence. Thus far



the servants of God were with him during the introductory period of their being. They enjoyed somewhat of the glories and felicities of heaven; they caught some bright reflections of its light and splendour as exhibited in occasional glimpses of its everlasting hills, as they pursued their weary pilgrimage through the wilderness of this lower world.

But after the conclusion of the appointed period of this world's duration, when the solemnities of the last day are now past, and the faithful followers of Christ gathered from all ages, and countries, and languages, have been honourably acquitted at his tribunal, and allowed to enter with reanimated bodies into his kingdom, they will henceforward be with him in the full and unreserved participation of the glory which he had prepared for them. It was the glorification of his people, as combined with the manifestation of the various attributes of Deity, which the Saviour had most prominently in view during the whole process of his mediatorial work. This important end he distinctly incorporated into that sublime and affectionate prayer, which he offered up unto his Father in behalf of the whole community of his people, just before he left the world. And when, after the completion of the arduous work of human redemption, and the arrangement of the various concerns and interests of his church upon earth, he made his triumphant entrance into the temple not made with hands—even heaven itself, the scene of his glorious residence, he took up his abode in that bright and holy place, not so much in his private and individual capacity, as in the public and relative

character of the Head and Representative of his people. He went as their precursor to prepare a place for them, to provide for their accommodation, to plead their cause, to assert their covenanted rights as pledged in his mediation, and as redeemed by his death, and thus to secure for them those gifts of grace, those crowns of glory, which he would now be commissioned to bestow upon them. And wearing those crowns, enjoying the blessed fruits of those graces, they will spend their eternity with him. United unto him as his members, they will partake by a mysterious and exquisite sympathy in all his relative and communicable perfections. They will shine forth amidst the unclouded blaze of that glory, which beams around his head, and they will be continually sublimating into higher degrees of purity, and be transformed into "the same image from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord."

His communicative glory will exalt and adorn every part of their nature. The higher powers of the understanding will, doubtless, bear a full share in the elevation to which they will be raised. The capacities of glorified spirits privileged to live in perpetual converse with Him, who is the fountain of all knowledge, will be expanded and enlarged in proportion to the advantages of the exalted society which they shall enjoy. The intellectual endowments of the humblest and meanest, if we may use such an expression, among the inhabitants of heaven, of those who may be regarded as stars of smallest magnitude in the firmament of glory, will transcend beyond comparison those of the brightest luminary upon

earth. The mental faculties of the very babes in the kingdom of heaven, will, probably, surpass those of Milton and of Newton in their most advanced state of sublimity and expansion upon earth. Their powers will be invigorated so as to conceive with promptitude and ease the great ideas, which the various objects around them will suggest, and comprehend with clearness and precision the mysterious and complicated truths, which before it had baffled their utmost endeavours to understand; so as to penetrate the depths of nature, and discover, at every step, the wisdom and power of its great Author—so as to unravel the intricacies of Providence, and, however involved the labyrinth, to discover goodness and faithfulness marked upon every turn, and love inscribed upon every portal; and above all, so as to form somewhat juster, though still inadequate, notions of that wonderful combination of the various attributes of Deity, which was displayed in the formation and accomplishment of the plan of human redemption. The sphere of information will be continually and endlessly widening, and the soul will be incessantly rising to new heights and sublimities of knowledge, without danger of exhausting its powers, and without the possibility of terminating its inquiries; for infinity will be its range, and eternity the period of its investigations.

The Affections also, the operations of which we are now more immediately concerned to discuss, will partake, in a corresponding measure, of the same glorifying process. The presence and society of Jehovah will elevate, transform, and harmonize them

in the most delightful and astonishing manner. The melody of his voice will sweetly attune them to his love. They will be raised in all their attachments and propensities to a congeniality with the scenes with which they are now conversant, to a height of purity and glory co-ordinate with the present order of existence. They will have laid aside every thing that was base, and earthly, and sensual. They will no longer be alloyed by an admixture of degrading passions, nor deteriorated by coming in contact with the debasing elements of pride and malice, and envy; but they will all concentrate and coalesce in the one predominating affection of love, and that love will be pure, generous, and expansive; exalted in its object, spiritual in its exercises, and intense in its energies; glorious, elevated, and divine, in all its tendencies and operations.

The bodies of believers, when fully admitted into the presence of the Lord, will also largely participate in the glory which He has prepared for them. On the morning of the general resurrection, those frail and perishable tabernacles, which for ages had mouldered into dust, shall be rebuilt in a style of surpassing splendour, and be transformed into edifices pure as the light of heaven, and permanent as the duration of eternity. That which had been sown in corruption shall be raised in incorruption. That which had been sown a natural body, shall be raised a spiritual body. The materialism of the bodily frame shall experience a mysterious change, by which it will lose its debasing qualities, and be raised to a congeniality of essence with the pure

properties of spirit. Thus the whole man will be glorified. Every constituent of nature being proportionably elevated and adorned, there will be no more conflict between the judgment and the affections, between the understanding and the heart. There will be no reluctance in the one to second the desires of the other ; but all, within and without, will be harmony, peace, and delightful co-operation.

2. We remark further, that the saints hereafter will be ever with the Lord in the realizing view and contemplation of his perfections. In their former state they could at best only see Him as through a glass darkly. To see the glory of the Lord, to have a distinct perception—a palpable manifestation of his resplendent attributes, was a desire very naturally expressed by Moses. And it has been anxiously desired by the faithful servants of God in every age of the world. But even that eminent and highly-favoured saint was but very faintly and partially indulged in his wish during his continuance in his earthly tabernacle. He was allowed to see but the skirts of those robes of glory, with which the character of Jehovah is invested and adorned ; but even this transient and imperfect view was, doubtless, attended with emotions of exquisite delight, with sensations of the purest and most exalted satisfaction. And it always has been one of the most constant employments, as well as the purest pleasures of the servants of God upon earth, to contemplate those dim shadows of his perfections, those faint representations of his glorious attributes, which are reflected from the mirror of his word, and portrayed on the face of his

creation. They have delighted to trace his wisdom in the minute, and to admire Him in the magnificent of nature. They have scanned His steps in the movements of the material universe, and in the even tenor of His providence. They have sought Him in his temple, where He has engaged to meet them, and to reveal himself unto them. And their souls have been filled with rapture, and they have seemed to be transported above earth, when they have been enabled to catch but a transient glimpse of his reconciled countenance. They have withdrawn to the solitude of their retired meditations; they have gone forth in the public ordinances of his worship, and have united themselves to the company of his people with the view of beholding Him, whom their soul loveth. But often they were utterly disappointed. The clouds of corruption either hid Him altogether from their view, or His visits were like those of a wayfaring man, that turneth in to tarry for a night. There was much of darkness in their clearest perceptions; there was much of what was grovelling in their sublimest contemplations.

But when they shall awake; when they shall be aroused from the sleep of death, and wing their upward flight and take their station at the throne of the Lamb, they shall behold his face in righteousness and be satisfied with his likeness. They shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is. In their risen body and in their glorified flesh they shall behold Him. They shall see Him, not through the faint and imperfect medium of faith, but they shall contemplate with the faculty of distinct and immediate



vision the bright countenance of Deity. They shall see the majesty of his power, the rectitude of his justice, the infinity of his wisdom, the immutability of his truth, the tenderness of his love, the beauty of his holiness, and the loveliness of his mercy, all conspicuously displayed and mutually reflected in the whole plan of his government, in the whole course of his administration, in the whole compass of his creation; in the past transactions of the earth; in the present felicities of heaven; in the brief retrospect of time; in the boundless prospect of eternity. Their vision will be clear without a cloud or intervening mist, constant without intervals of concealment or interruption, and permanent without the remotest possibility of its ever being lost in night. And, finally, it will be cheerful and complacent; no frown of displeasure shall ever contract his brow, no gloom of dissatisfaction shall ever darken the bright serenity of his countenance.

3. We believe again that the faithful shall hereafter be with God in the maintenance of a sublime communion, an intimate fellowship with Him. It was their privilege upon earth to enjoy, in a subordinate measure, the communion of the Holy Ghost, to have their fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. But it was an intercourse conducted upon comparatively distant terms. It was converse held with One, who hid his face behind a veil, it was friendship maintained with One who dwelt in a far country. It was society carried on between parties, who hardly understood each other, and which there was much of unfaithfulness and inaptitude on

their part to interrupt and embarrass. Conscious guilt frequently abashed them in the presence of that pure and holy Being, into whose partial fellowship they were admitted, and made them desirous of hiding themselves from his view. They were yet but inadequately trained and disciplined for holding intimate communication with a Being so glorious and exalted. There was a want of perfect congeniality of disposition, and a necessity of continual distraction on account of the cares and anxieties of life. But in heaven, the scene of their final joys and triumphs, all these disabilities will have been removed; all these barriers of guilt and remaining depravity will have been thrown down and consumed in the world's last conflagration. All these impediments to the spontaneous flow of social affection, to the free and unrestrained exercise of friendly intercourse will have ceased. The scenes of Eden will be renewed under circumstances of greater glory and serenity. The voice of the Lord God walking through the heavenly paradise will be heard and hailed with delight; nor will there be a disposition in any of the inhabitants to hide themselves from his presence. There will be no prohibitory injunction as a test of obedience, because obedience shall have been confirmed and perfected in a preceding state of probation. There no malicious and enticing spirit will be found, because the tempter and the accuser of the brethren, with the whole band of his rebellious associates, will have been cast out, without the possibility of regaining an entrance, to create a mutiny among the angels, or to try the fidelity of the saints.

The redeemed shall then enjoy advantages of communion with God infinitely superior to those which were or could have been enjoyed in the earthly paradise. They shall see God, not merely in his works or in some striking display of his glory, but they will behold God incarnate, the essence of the Deity mysteriously and incomprehensibly, but at the same time manifestly and gloriously imbodyed in their own nature. They will see his goodness not only stamped in visible impress upon the wonderful page of his creation, but also warmly glowing forth in the benignity of human features. They will hear his voice, not in the distant accents of a sound proceeding from afar, but audibly uttered with the organs of human speech. They will have to thank Him with warmer affection than the mere obligations of creation and providence could have kindled. They will have to adore Him in higher strains, and acknowledge Him with more ardent gratitude than could have been awakened by blessings inferior to those of redeeming love. They will adore Him in language taught by his own Spirit, and celebrate Him in songs of everlasting praise.

And, finally, they will be with Him in the full and unbounded fruition of his love. It is this circumstance that will constitute the perfection of their happiness, that will form the absolute consummation of their bliss. They were the objects of Jehovah's love, indeed, in their low estate, as they lay helpless and unpitied amidst the overwhelming ruins of the fall. He loved them while they were

yet sinners, and made provision, by a sacrifice the dearest which heaven could have afforded, for their full and unqualified restoration. He loved them with a more direct and active exercise of his regards, while, now reconciled unto Him by the death of his Son, and renewed and sanctified by his Spirit, they sojourned in the world, and lived as strangers and pilgrims upon earth. But the bond of union between Him and their souls was yet incomplete. His love was yet but partially shed abroad in their hearts. They had but a slight foretaste, a scanty prelibation of that rich banquet, which they were afterwards destined to enjoy. The rays descended into their hearts from a distance, and were cooled in their progress by many intervening clouds. They were dissipated by worldly care, and almost neutralized in their effects by the inherent damp of corruption. But now, when they shall have escaped the cold atmosphere of this lower world; when they shall have been lifted up and drawn to the immediate vicinity of their centre of light and heat, the beams of divine love will glow upon them and within them with unabated strength and intensity. Jehovah will then pour upon them the full tide of his affections; while they, surrendering themselves to the impulse of that tide, will be carried forward in endless progress of increasing and accumulating bliss. God himself, in all the exhaustless resources of his infinite perfections, is become their portion. And, replenished with his fulness, they are blessed in the fruition of his love, and receive from Him such fresh supplies of happi-

ness as are adequate to the utmost measure of their still expanding capacities.

Such, in its general features, so far as we are able to gather from the indistinct intimations of Scripture, will be the consummated felicity of glorified spirits hereafter. And as the exercise of the Affections will constitute a large portion of that bliss, it may be fairly assumed, independently of all other considerations, that an essential part of true religion here is the due use and discipline of those Affections.

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## PART II.

THE EVILS LIABLE TO RESULT FROM A MISTAKEN  
AND ILL-GOVERNED EXERCISE OF THE  
AFFECTIONS IN RELIGION.

## SECTION I.

THE ERROR OF MAKING RELIGION ALMOST ENTIRELY TO CONSIST  
OF INTERNAL FEELINGS.

BUT legitimate and highly important as is a suitable and well-regulated exercise of the Affections in the formation and progressive advancement of the Christian character, it is unquestionable that, like all other constituent faculties of the mind, they are liable to perversion and abuse. It will now be our business, therefore, in accordance with the method of investigation proposed at the commencement of this Inquiry, to state some of the *evils and mistakes*, which not unfrequently arise from erroneous views, or the excessive indulgence of this essential principle of human nature, as connected with the subject of religion. Many of these misapplications and obliquities, indeed, have a very strict analogy, and bear a very close affinity to those, which have been already remarked as noxious excrescences, occasionally attaching themselves to the luxuriant and overgrown ramifications of the imaginative faculty. When, however, such erroneous views and distorted representations of divine truth are confined to the lighter



and more speculative province of the mind, they are comparatively harmless and ineffective in their operation. But when they descend into the heart, and blend themselves with all that is interesting and commanding in the Affections, their poisonous influence becomes infinitely more active and virulent. According to their several degrees of perversity and force they disorganize the character; they destroy the nice and well-adjusted balance of the intellectual faculties; they invert the order of that regular and harmonious movement, which should distinguish a well-constituted economy of mind in the exercise of all its powers. They introduce wildness and extravagance, where the soberness of truth should prevail. According to their peculiar quality and tendency they rise into the fantastic heights of inordinate confidence and presumption; they degenerate into offensive and unmeaning singularities of conduct and a narrow censoriousness of disposition, or they sink into despondency, and sometimes plunge the soul into the gloomiest depths of despair. These several forms of evil are freely acknowledged occasionally, though but rarely, to spring from an ill-regulated exercise of the Affections; not for the unscriptural and unphilosophical purpose of proscribing them altogether from the service of religion—for on this plea what faculty of the mind would not fall under a similar sentence of condemnation?—but with a view of supplying a corrective, by pointing out symptoms of the disease.

It is, in the first place, an obvious and decisive evidence of a false and fanatical theory of religion,

and of an ill-balanced arrangement of the mental system, when *Christianity is made solely or mainly to consist of internal Sensations and Emotions*. The unquestionable fact, that there may be much of speculative knowledge, and of the exterior decency of morality, unaccompanied with a vital and influential principle of religion in the heart, has led some persons to contract their views of divine truth, to narrow its legitimate range of dominion over the human character, to detach it from its natural connection with every province of the mind and conduct, and to concentrate the whole of its essence in the fervency and energy of inward feeling. In the estimate of character, such persons seldom look with the requisite share of attention to the state of the higher faculties of the mind and the prevailing habits of the life, provided, indeed, it be free from gross overt acts of sin; for we know of no sect of decent and rational religionists, with whom a uniform and unrestrained course of practical profligacy would not be regarded as a virtual renunciation of all pretension to piety. But the persons, of whom we are now speaking, though they do not profess to abolish the necessity, or, within due limits, to undervalue the importance of knowledge and morality, yet clearly make vehement and impassioned, and in some instances perverted feeling, to the almost entire exclusion of every other criterion, the great standard of the religious character. Aware that the intellect may be stored with the varied treasures of theological science, and notionally enlightened with the brightest illuminations of truth, and that the

conduct in its relative and social bearing may be adorned with many of the graces and embellishments of a specious and imposing virtue, or distinguished by many of the simple and unobtrusive excellencies, the amiability, the integrity, the inoffensiveness of humble and retired life, while, at the same time, to use the expressive phraseology of the Apostle, "the carnal mind is enmity against God," they too hastily admit the unqualified persuasion, that religion is not merely something deeper and more vital—something which opens a more direct communication with heaven than these meagre endowments, but, that it is something which is specifically distinct from all essential connection with these departments of the character, with which they are found associated. *Feeling* with them, in the character of a Christian, occupies the same place in the scale of importance, as Demosthenes made *action* to sustain in that of an orator. It is the first, the second, and the third qualification, and so paramount is the importance attached to it, that every other requisite, though assumed and faintly acknowledged, appears, in the general estimate, to sink into comparative insignificance. If an individual has passed through a course of strong, and often turbid and indistinct sensations—if he has been the subject of a painful process of mental exercise, usually denominated experience, the order and technical arrangement of which are frequently determined and distinctly specified,—and we are far from denying that divine truth in its application to the heart and conscience, is generally marked by the same line of operation,—it is concluded

without a due inquiry into the clearness of his views, the extent of his scriptural information, and the practical purity of his conduct, that he is in possession of all that is valuable and distinguishingly peculiar in religion. It would be as unjust as it would be invidious to charge any particular community as universally fallen into this state of aberration from sound and enlightened principles; but individuals, labouring in a degree more or less under this delusion, may doubtless be found among all classes of professors, with whom religion is an affair of the heart. And hence arises the expediency that Christian ministers should labour as much as possible, and as much as is fairly consistent with circumstances, to address the feelings of their hearers, through the medium of their understandings,—that the foundation of a solid and well-balanced piety should be laid in an intelligent acquaintance with the truth in all its bearings upon the character—that the light of Knowledge and the warmth of Affection, emanating from their instructions, may fall with a blended and mutually subservient effect—that, losing none of their fervour and zeal, and diluting none of their powerful and frequent appeals to the heart, they should direct their efforts with equal energy to the illumination of the mind, and the conviction of the judgment, in order to secure the concurrence and authority of these commanding faculties in their assault upon the fortress of the Affections. Then might they hope with the divine blessing that the man of God enlightened by the beams of truth, and warmed by the simultaneous influence of renewing

and sanctifying grace, carrying on its operations upon the heart, would become perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

Without such an attention to the cultivation of the intellectual part of the general system of the mind, there is a danger that religion should lose its hold of that great and distinguishing power, which the Author of nature designed to be the guide and director of all the rest, and by a remoter consequence, that it should be detached from its indispensable connection with, and influence upon, the conduct. We sometimes hear, indeed, among those who cannot be suspected of having experienced any very overwhelming sense of the importance of religion, that such and such persons have good hearts—hearts, it may be presumed, full of the purest feelings and the devoutest dispositions, while the whole course of their conduct gives pretty clear indications that it is *only* a goodness of the heart. And we are sometimes disposed to ask, why this mass of goodness allows itself so tamely to be pent up within such a narrow enclosure, and never attempts to burst forth through any of the numberless channels of practical piety and zeal. We are apt to wonder, seeing the heart is so well replenished with every thing that is good and estimable in feeling, why it is that the light is so completely and effectually prevented from shining before men—why it is that the ostensible character presents so much of the appearance of a dark lantern—why the practice proves so dense and unfit a medium for the transmission of those rays of religious Affection which

are supposed to glow so intensely, and to shine so resplendently within.

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## SECTION II.

INWARD IMPRESSIONS LIABLE TO SUPERSEDE PRACTICAL EVIDENCE  
IN THE ESTIMATE OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S OWN CHARACTER.

WE may notice, as another evil of enormous magnitude, which has sometimes arisen from a false and distorted view of the office of the Affections, as connected with the principles of religion, that upon the mere strength of internal impressions persons have been led confidently to assert that they enjoyed the peculiar and distinguishing favour of God; while in the mean time their character was palpably defective in those practical evidences, without which, under ordinary circumstances, no other criterion, however plausible, can, upon scriptural grounds, be decisive. Experience shows that the Feelings, while they operate with force and vigour, have an amazing influence upon the views of the understanding, and the convictions of the judgment. It does not always require the aid of absolute and conscious hypocrisy to induce a man to maintain a proposition, or to assert a fact, for which he can adduce no other proof than the confident but often groundless persuasion of his own mind. How frequently do we witness a specimen of the *fides carbonaria*—the circular process of reasoning, while persons of this description attempt to account for the unhesitating assurance which they possess, that they are special favourites



of Heaven, and infallible heirs of glory. They believe this momentous truth, a truth so cheering to those who have arrived at it by the legitimate method of a calm and sober investigation, and by a deduction of solid and scriptural arguments applied to the mind and character; but they believe it for no other reason than because their own strong and uncontrollable sensations have wrought in them a belief of it. Where Feeling vastly predominates in the character, whatever form it may assume, and through whatever channels its operations may flow, it soon establishes a most complete despotism in the soul, it brings every other power into thrall; and the nice distinctions, the subtle argumentations of the Reason and the Understanding are as impotent to resist its force, as shreds of flax to repel the flame of a fiery furnace.

Religious professors of this high temperature disdain to descend to the cool atmosphere of a deliberate and dispassionate inquiry into the real state of their character; they seem to be perfect strangers to the apostolical precept, to be ready to give every man a *reason* of the hope that is in them with meekness and fear. It is enough for them that they have the witness within themselves, not the accountable and intelligible testimony of the divine Spirit imparted through the medium of those graces and affections, which He implants in the soul, and powerfully confirmed by those practical effects—by that unvarying train of devout and virtuous habits—by that expansive charity—by that unbending integrity—by that purity of manners, and that sanctity

of deportment, which manifest themselves in the outward conduct ;—not the seal of substantial piety and holiness impressed upon the character, the superscription of which may be known and read of all men, but something in the form of a direct communication from heaven, involving an esoteric signification, which is to be understood only by him, to whom it is revealed ; which is too unshackled and independent in its mode of operation to be reduced to any principles of rational and scriptural investigation ; which is too subtle and attenuated to be embodied in action, and to become palpable in its effects to the faculties of external perception, and too delicate to transpire in any other way than through the bold and confident assertions of him, to whom it has been vouchsafed. To direct the mind of such an one to those evidences of his justification and adoption, and other associated privileges of the new covenant, which the Apostles have so fully detailed, and upon the possession of which they insist with so much earnestness, would be, in his case, like holding a candle to the sun. Convinced, or at least professing to be convinced himself, that he is in the full enjoyment of the favour of God, and inalienably entitled to the future inheritance of glory, he expects that others should give implicit credence to his declarations ; that, instead of following the apostolic precept of trying the spirits, whether they be of God, they should at once acknowledge the safety of his condition, and that by an intuitive glance into the interior machinery of his character they should discover the purity of his principles, and the sincerity

of his professions, while every thing that is ostensible to the eye gives but too much reason to apprehend the reverse.

How these strong persuasions of individual and personal safety are produced in the mind, by what train of concurrent influences they are formed and consolidated, until they arrive at the pitch of bold and daring assumption, it would in many instances be difficult to determine. That, in some cases, they are partly attributable to the agency of another spirit, than the Spirit of light and holiness, there is hardly room to doubt. Pretensions of this nature unaccompanied with those practical vouchers, that alone can render them tolerable to a Christian mind, present a specimen of disgracing and outraging the Gospel, with the adoption of some of the leading and most vital doctrines of which they are very generally associated, which, we may presume, cannot fail to be highly pleasing to the malignant disposition of him, who knows, in order to obtain his purposes, how to assume the guise of an angel of light. That a mode of instruction, which almost entirely confines itself to a development of the privileges of the Christian, which deals in exaggerated representations of the liberty and security of the believer, while his duties and moral obligations are kept out of sight, or briefly hinted, has a powerful tendency to cherish the same proud and delusive habit of mind and feeling, is unquestionable. Nothing can be a more effectual preservative against it, than a close and undeviating adherence to that wise and judicious combination of privilege and duty, of which the writings of the

apostles afford us so many admirable specimens. It is thus that the balance of the Christian character is maintained—that the consciousness of freedom from condemnation is prevented from rising into pride, and a sense of infirmity and imperfection in meeting the demands of moral obligation is preserved from sinking into despondency.

We trust it is needless to say that the preceding remarks are not intended, in the slightest degree, to disparage the important doctrine of a divine influence upon the heart, as indispensably necessary to accompany the truth of Scripture, in order that it may produce its appropriate effect upon the soul. And far be it from us to limit the Holy One of Israel, with respect to the mode of communicating that influence. There doubtless are diversities of operation, and it is not for us to say that the Holy Spirit may not convey an immediate impression of peace and safety to the mind, where the character and conduct, estimated by the rule of a written revelation, do not manifestly contravene such a supposition. That a good and holy man may not be favoured with a direct assurance of his having attained to a state of peace with God, through the medium of the appropriated blessings and privileges of the Gospel—such an assurance as excludes all doubt and disquietude of spirit, and enables him to rejoice in the prospect of approaching blessedness, is what cannot, upon any ground of Scripture, and without the most unbecoming presumption, by any one be asserted.

## SECTION III.

STRONG FEELINGS, UNACCOMPANIED WITH SOUND JUDGMENT, IN  
DANGER OF COMPLETELY UNHINGING THE MIND.

As another ill effect, liable to arise from an intense exercise and an unrestrained indulgence of the sensitive affections in religion, I observe, that without the counterpoise of a strong and well-regulated judgment, they are in danger of completely overpowering and unHINGING the mind, and of producing an unnatural and grotesque effect upon the body. It was doubtless never the design of religion to introduce a species of anarchy and confusion into the harmonious and well-constituted economy of the human faculties; to snatch away the rudder from the hand of Reason, to whose care the vessel of the character has been mainly intrusted, and to unfurl the sails of the Affections, in order to be swelled by every gale, and to be driven without any specific direction at the caprice of every blast. It was never the object of this placid and celestial principle to raise a storm of conflicting emotions in the breast, amidst the tumultuous din and collision of which the voice of the understanding would be drowned, and the mild accents of wisdom would be lost; to interfere with the legitimate functions of the intellectual faculty, and thus to derange those gradations and mutual subserviencies, which should invariably distinguish the operations of the mental powers; in short, to produce any effect, either upon the mind or body, which can exhibit religion in any other form or under any other aspect than that of a reasonable service—we mean, not the

cold and lifeless mechanism of external formalities, but a system of conduct, controlled and regulated by wisdom, and accordant with the dictates of sobriety and truth; but, at the same time, animated with the glow of affection, and impregnated with the energy of zeal.

But there are circumstances, under which this salutary balance of the faculties is liable to be completely lost. When, for example, in the incipient stages of the religious life, the transcendent importance of eternal things presents itself to the view—when, perhaps, from a life of utter worldliness or of thoughtless and degrading sensuality, an individual is at once awakened to a sense of his danger, and the awful realities of a world to come first fasten themselves with a penetrating effect upon his attention; when a sound, as that of the last trumpet, seems to alarm him out of the slumbers of spiritual death; when a voice of thunder, louder than that of Sinai, seems to announce his guilt and condemnation: when these considerations of imminent peril and of personal delinquency come upon him, as is sometimes the case, with the suddenness of terror and surprise, it is no wonder that his sensations should be in a high degree powerful and overwhelming. And instances have occurred, in which they have for a while had the effect of throwing the whole intellectual system out of joint. This, however, is for the most part owing to some previous bias—to some radical defect in the constitution of the mind—or some predominating habits, which bore sway in the character.

Nor is it merely by the more awful and terrific



views of religious truth—of the realities of eternity, and of the powers of the world to come, that the mind is thus liable to be unsettled and overborne; but the brighter revelations of life and immortality, the more delightful and animating scenes of the celestial paradise, the visions of glory bursting with unusual radiance upon the eye of the mind, have sometimes been attended with an ecstasy of pleasure, and have thrown the soul into a delirium of joy, which was more than the infirmity of nature could bear. The contemplation of divine love, as manifested in the work of redemption, being an exercise of beneficent kindness indeed, the dimensions of which surpass the grasp of all created capacity, has sometimes produced an effect upon tender spirits, which materially interfered with the calm and deliberate functions of the understanding. It so completely absorbed, for the time, all other views and feelings and interests, as to occasion a degree of impatience of every other mental exercise or practical occupation, to relax the firmness of cool and solid principle, to unnerve the vigour of manly sentiment, to concentrate the whole duty of a Christian into the solitude and retirement of meditative affection, and thus obviously to unfit him for those conflicts with evil, and those active and energetic endeavours for the advancement of spiritual and moral good; in short, for strenuously co-operating with God in the promotion of his great designs, and efficiently discharging the obligations of the present mixed state of existence. This was the leading error of the Mystics.

But it is not only upon the economy of the mind, that occasional bursts or the habitual exercise of ill-regulated and over-wrought feeling is apt to produce a disorganizing effect; but internal impressions of this nature sometimes display themselves most objectionably in the influence, which they are found to exert upon the bodily system. Vehement exclamations unseasonably uttered, and without any very appropriate meaning; fantastic movements and attitudes, and sometimes swoons and hysterical distortions of the frame, are among those forms of evil and unbecoming excess, in which the intensity of ill-governed religious feeling occasionally manifests itself. There are some sects of professors which have derived their names, either voluntarily assumed, or jestingly and profanely imposed, from these uncouth and occasionally ludicrous appendages to what is devoutly sincere and morally estimable in their general character. For it would be in the highest degree uncandid and unjust—it would be in direct opposition to the known and acknowledged testimony of fact to charge the communities, which are particularly distinguished by these habits, as being universally fools and hypocrites, if not disguised profligates, as their still more contemptible deriders have been always disposed to do. Many of these grotesque and incongruous effects are doubtless attributable to imperfect knowledge, to mistaken interpretations of Scripture, to conventional habits, to the contagious influence of example, and to the want of imposing a discreet and salutary restraint upon the emotions of the heart,—circumstances deeply lamentable in

themselves indeed, and greatly injurious in their consequences, but by no means incompatible in ordinary cases with purity of principle, spirituality of affection, and uniform consistency of conduct. Every thing, which can even incidentally expose religion to contempt, is to be deplored. Such manifestations of its influence as have the necessary effect of exciting the prejudice and disgust of enlightened and cultivated minds, and affording a subject of mockery and needless ridicule to the profane, must be strongly and unhesitatingly censured. This sublime principle should maintain such dignity of character, such sobriety of deportment, such a power of self-control, not shrinking, however, from a vigorous, energetic, and animated display of its genuine and impressive tendencies, as that impiety may be constrained to respect it, and feel its own comparative meanness and worthlessness before it. Although, therefore, it is not required of the earnest and devout religionist so to suppress and neutralize his feelings as that the heart, which has been softened into a proper susceptibility to the influence of heavenly things, should again be petrified into a heart of stone; although a penetrating and commanding sense of the transcendent importance of eternal realities may transfuse itself, with a salutary effect, throughout all the powers of the mind;—this indeed is no more than is necessary to re-establish that equilibrium of the spirit with respect to the claims of futurity, which was so completely destroyed by the great apostasy of our nature; although in the case of the private Christian, or the public teacher, “the soul of fire”

cannot, and need not, be expected to smother its blazing energies, with almost literal truth, within the stiff and jointless inclosures of a frame of "adamant;" although religion never appears to greater advantage, nor commands a more suitable and beneficent impression than when it glows with living lustre in the radiance of an animated countenance, and appears to swell and electrify every nerve with its own overpowering inspirations; yet assuredly all forced and extravagant gesticulations, all "bodily exercise," which is calculated to give rise to light and ludicrous associations, as well as all such partial representations of divine truth as are likely to produce a disorganizing effect upon the well-adjusted operations of the mental system, are to be deprecated as inexpedient, and to be condemned as a violation of that precept, which commands all things to be done decently, and in order—as an infraction of that principle, which enjoins rightly to divide the word of truth.

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#### SECTION IV.

THE DISTRESS OCCASIONED BY AN ATTEMPT TO FIX THE TIME OF  
CONVERSION BY A REGARD TO EXPERIMENTAL FEELING.

ANOTHER injurious effect, which is sometimes found to arise from an ill-judged and undue regard to feeling, as connected with the principles of religion, is, that persons allow themselves to sink into despondency or despair, because they cannot, by a reference to their internal emotions, mark out to their own satisfaction the precise point of time at

which their conversion took place. Nothing can be more groundless, more destitute of all scriptural warrant, than the supposed or alleged necessity of thus fixing the exact chronological epoch in the history of the character, at which divine truth began to exercise a saving influence upon the soul. In most cases, indeed, this important period was too strongly marked by a change of views and habits to leave the process very doubtful or remotely uncertain with respect to time where the fact has really taken place. In the idea of what is sometimes called an instantaneous conversion, by which it may be presumed, nothing more is meant than a powerful and effectual impression produced upon the mind, usually through the medium of a particular agency, and giving rise to an immediate change of principles and conduct, we see nothing which can fairly be regarded as unscriptural, unphilosophical, or enthusiastic. If it be admitted that an influence is communicated at all from heaven, either mediately or otherwise, the object of which is to effect a salutary revolution, or to carry on a process of moral renovation in the character, it must be obvious that it *begins* to be imparted at some period or other; and if that period should be the mature season of life, and very possibly in the midst of a career of immorality and irreligion, where is the enthusiasm of supposing that the first coruscations of that celestial illumination, which is gradually to unfold upon the soul, should not be altogether imperceptible; that the incipient fermentations of that principle, which is to germinate, to spring up, and to fructify under the invigorating

warmth of heaven, until it has been transplanted into the Paradise above, should not be wholly unfelt? Where is the superstition of attaching the commencement of such a work of transformation to a specified point of time, of dating the operation of a cause from the period, at which all the intimations of thought and feeling, demonstrably confirmed by the appropriate phenomena of conduct, began to evince its existence? We might rather ask, under the peculiar circumstances, which have now been stated, how great is the absurdity of maintaining, or even of supposing the reverse? The whole current of scriptural analogy and example is assuredly in favour of conversion frequently taking place at a specific time and through a known instrumentality. And with respect to the apparent incredibility of the instantaneousness of this great change, nobody has ever had the folly and effrontery of maintaining that the renovation was at once perfect and complete; but all that can be rationally affirmed is, that it was instantaneous in its beginning; and in many cases, sufficiently perceptible to the individual for all the purposes of consolation and encouragement.

Allowing this to be the case, however—not denying that the great work of spiritual regeneration or conversion is often effected by means and accompanied by circumstances, of which it is scarcely possible that the individual should be utterly unconscious, as the testimony of Scripture, illustrated by fact and experience, abundantly demonstrates, we can by no means grant that it is indispensably necessary that the time and instrument of it be, in



every case, distinctly visible to the eye of the mind, or be capable of being confidently pointed out. Much misery and delusion have arisen from requiring in this case, a test of genuineness—a criterion of real Christianity, which the Bible nowhere demands, and which the circumstantial condition of many persons renders utterly incapable of application. This principle is obviously inadmissible with reference to those, who like Jeremiah, are mysteriously and progressively, though, in the earlier stages of character, imperceptibly sanctified from the womb; those, in whose hearts the germ of grace may have been implanted at the initiatory rite of baptism. In such persons the birth from heaven—the birth from above, is almost simultaneous with their natural birth, and co-ordinate in time with the birth of water as its emblem. It is also rarely that it can be applied, with any degree of certainty, to those who have from their childhood enjoyed the advantage of a religious and virtuous education; those, who have imbibed correct theoretic views of divine truth, with the first development of their intellectual faculties; who, from the first dawn of infancy and opening manhood, have invariably been subject to the salutary and directing control of parental authority and example; who have thus been gradually trained to an inward respect and veneration for the truth, and a uniform compliance with its ceremonial ordinances and practical requisitions, and whom nature has probably endowed with her most estimable qualities, and adorned with the loveliest graces. In these characters it is natural to expect that the process of regeneration, at what-

ever period of life it is carried into effect, should be attended with far less of deep and penetrating emotion, and of striking and ostensible phenomena than in persons of an opposite description. The conversion of Paul of Tarsus, for example, might far more easily be determined as to its chronology and circumstances, than that of the prophet already mentioned. And in modern times, that of Watts or Doddridge was far less distinguishable as to its precise period and agency than that of the revered John Newton, or of Count Struensè—the former once an abandoned profligate, the latter a sceptical philosopher and politician, as well as a vicious and unprincipled debauchee.

It frequently happens, however, that this allowable and unimportant difference of circumstances of times and seasons is completely overlooked. Persons of weak and tender consciences, sensitively alive to every point most remotely connected with their spiritual condition, are not satisfied to judge of their state by the substantial evidence, which the conduct of their lives, and the habitual frame of their spirits, supply; but aware of the indispensable necessity of a great and universal change, as, independently of other considerations, the very analogy of the term, by which it is expressed, evidently imports, before they can be qualified to enter into the kingdom of heaven; injudiciously and ignorantly applying a few occasional instances recorded in Scripture, in which the attendants of the regenerating and converting energy of grace were palpable and striking, as specimens and rules of

invariable procedure; learning, moreover, from verbal or written representation the process of deep mental exercise, the alternations of fear and hope preceding the firm establishment of an assured confidence of acceptance, which others, differently constituted, and deemed by Infinite Wisdom proper subjects of a different economy, have experienced, they are apprehensive that, as they have never undergone such an oppressive and overwhelming order of operations, they have "no part nor lot in the matter." They forget, that where the disease of the moral nature has not been confirmed by a long course of vicious indulgence, or utter irreligion, so as to become, if we may so speak, a chronic disorder, nor aggravated by a wilful neglect and abuse of the proffered means of restoration, the divine Physician employs a milder method than He deems it necessary to use in cases of more inveterate and protracted malady. The disease is indeed radical and universal in the present fallen and degraded character of man; and the remedial agency must be substantially the same in every case. But where the disorder has been prevented from running into the excess of impiety and moral turpitude, by the application of such palliatives, as early care, educational principles, and native dispositions of a more amiable and generous order could supply, the restorative process may well be imagined to be commenced and carried on with equal effect by such gentle alteratives, as are scarcely perceptible in their operations.

The safest principle, by which man can judge of

his condition is to bring it at once to the test of Scripture. There he has an infallible standard, which being designed for universality of application, cannot in its judicious and enlightened use, possibly deceive or mislead him. This ultimate and decisive criterion does not indeed exclude or dispense with a suitable order of affections as an essential element of that character, which it pronounces safe and holy. But the main stress of its requirements it doubtless places upon those moral and practical graces—those zealous and active performances of the revealed will of God, which are the invariable, the necessary fruits of a grateful affection; which are the pure streams spontaneously and insensibly emanating from the divine love opened in the heart. The Feelings, as a test of character, are employed in Scripture, as thus being less liable to perversion and delusion, rather with a reference to their effects than in their own immediate operation. Where the genuine fruits of the Spirit manifest themselves in the life and conduct, it may there be safely assumed that the heart and affections have been deeply impregnated with the influences of the Spirit; that a principle of vitality has been implanted, and a celestial energy imparted, which have quickened and pervaded, however gently, and perhaps imperceptibly, the whole moral system. But he, who will altogether withdraw his attention from these tangible and convincing phenomena, and will seek the evidences of his condition in emotions of the heart, which, however necessary and important, are, to a considerable degree, mysterious and undefin-

able; he who will sound the depth, gauge the dimensions, and investigate the qualities of other persons' feelings, between whose case and his own there may be little or no analogy, and apply them as a rule of admeasurement to his own character, for any other purpose than that of stirring up his zeal, and enkindling the fervour of his spirit by the glow of their congenial warmth, adopts a wrong and illusive method for determining the genuineness of his religion. "To the law and the testimony" is the last and most satisfactory resort, in this as well as every other estimate of principle, doctrine and duty. If the habitual character speaks the plain and practical language, which they require and enforce, it may, without danger or hesitation, be concluded that the root of the matter is there.

Nor is it merely with respect to the primary work of converting grace that an injudicious regard to sensitive Affection is in danger of embarrassing and distressing the mind. There are many who suffer their views of their state before God, and their estimate of their Christian attainments, continually to fluctuate with the varying tide—with the incessant ebbs and flows of their feelings. Without ardour of affection, we have abundantly shown that there can be no real Christianity, much less a high order of advancement in the religious character. But it is perfectly needless and unjust to suffer every occasional instance of coldness and depression, which a thousand unavoidable circumstances may concur in producing, to throw the mind into a state of spiritual doubt and despondency. Surely a Christian

has a firmer basis upon which to erect his hopes, than that he should be unsettled by every blast which may convey a chilling influence to his heart. He has sounder principles, by which to regulate his anticipations of the future, than that he should be plunged into a state of despondency, or raised into excessive elevation with every alteration of the mental thermometer. Bodily infirmity, a deranged state of the nervous or biliary system, and outward affliction, or an overwhelming mass of necessary business and secular occupation, may severally, during their continuance, be attended with a deadening influence upon the Affections; while the character, the moment it has disengaged itself from these oppressive embarrassments, proves that it has sustained no material decay by kindling into reanimated warmth and proceeding with undiminished vigour along the path of activity and obedience. In illustration of the progressive influence of the religious principle, as well as of every other leading attribute of character, Bishop Butler, with his usual profundity of remark, observes, that the general effect of continued habit is to weaken *feeling*, and to confirm and strengthen a course of *practical* duty. This circumstance sufficiently accounts for those apprehensions of spiritual declension which frequently distress Christians of a zealous and self-observant spirit, because their affections may not be quite so warm and susceptible as they have once known them; while, however, in all the substantial endowments of the renewed character, they appear to be steadily on the advance.



It is dangerous, however, to carry this principle too far, and to allow it too great a latitude of application. A real deterioration of character generally commences in the Affections,—in the decay of their vital and animating warmth,—in their diversion from their appropriate objects, and in their immoderate and ill-directed indulgence upon things of a fugitive and transitory nature. It is possible that the Christian's first love should reprehensibly and lamentably wax cold, and that he may have good reason to bewail that it is not with him as it was in months that are past,—that the springs of his consolation are dried up, and that all refreshing communication between heaven and his soul has been cut off. The genuine and proper order of the Christian Character, as the estimable author of the "History of the Church of Christ" has well remarked is, that the warmth and energy of the devout affections should grow in proportion to the increasing light and knowledge of the understanding. And where the reverse of this is strongly manifested, a most dangerous relapse, if not total apostasy, may be justly apprehended.

From the habit of contemplating the character, and estimating it favourably or otherwise, with a primary and almost exclusive reference to the Feelings, individuals, and sometimes whole communities have been led to take their rule of duty, and their motives of conduct, from the same source. This most injurious and mischievous error appears to have formed a very prominent part in the system of the Mystics. The same mistake, perhaps under

a no less dangerous and objectionable form, has been adopted by those who, professing, and we doubt not unfeignedly feeling, the deepest reverence for the sacred Scriptures, suffer their conduct to be mainly regulated by what they conceive to be the light and motions of the Holy Spirit stirring within them, and arousing them to appropriate action. To such persons a written revelation would seem to be in a great measure useless, and to be almost entirely superseded by that commanding and oracular director, which, like the attendant spirit of Socrates, has taken up his abode in their own breasts, and is at all times ready to point out the path in which they are to advance, and to check their progress whenever they are in danger of making a wrong and unauthorized movement. Under the influence of these impulses, persons have frequently been urged into measures, which, apart from the authority of these mandates, they would have unhesitatingly censured and condemned. In the absence of these supposed celestial intimations, they will venture upon scarcely any undertaking of importance; but when they begin sensibly to feel the inspirations with which they are become fraught, they are conscious of increasing uneasiness until they have given vent to what they are prompted to utter, or have engaged in the enterprise, on which they are so powerfully urged to embark. To the voice of this internal monitor, they deem themselves bound to yield the most implicit obedience, and on all questions of importance they appear literally to regard it as the voice of God within them. That

the divine Spirit can immediately produce such impressions upon the heart, and sensibly affect with such inclinations to speech or action, as leave no doubt of their origin, and that he does, on some occasions, thus actuate the minds of those, who sincerely look for his guidance in modern times, as unquestionably was the case in earlier periods of the Church, is more than we can venture to deny; and it is an important mixed inquiry of metaphysical and theological science how we are fairly to account for those emotions, by which men, of whose sincerity we have no reason to doubt, and of whose sound, and, in many cases, very superior intellectual endowments we are certain, and whose personal character, moreover, it is impossible to regard otherwise than with feelings of veneration and respect, believe themselves to be divinely excited and impelled to the performance of duties which, independently of such suggestions, they would not venture to undertake. Where these secret monitors obviously tend to good, and are in entire accordance with the precepts and declarations of the written record, it would be unphilosophical and unjust to trace them to any principle of evil; and yet the whole tenor of revelation, the whole analogy of religion, as a system conducted by mediate agency and operation, forbid us to recognize in them that direct emanation from heaven, which the language of those who profess to be guided by them would sometimes seem to imply. The most natural and correct interpretation of them, generally considered, appears to be that they spring from the exercise of

conscience, partially enlightened by Scripture, and voluntarily set at work, combined with those peculiar associations, sometimes salutary and sometimes imposing and deceptive, which are connected with a specific mode of intercourse and intellectual discipline, and the established habits of a community.

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## SECTION V.

THE STATE OF THE AFFECTIONS IN THE IMMEDIATE PROSPECT  
OF DEATH NO SURE TEST OF SPIRITUAL CHARACTER AND  
CONDITION.

THE last error, which we shall notice as not unfrequently connected with the exercise of sensitive Affection in religion, is when frames and feelings, as they have been often technically called, are made a test of character and a criterion of safety, either by the individual himself, or by those with whom he is surrounded, in the immediate prospect of death. It may, doubtless, be laid down as a general principle, that they who have really been invested with the privileges, and endued with the graces of the Christian religion, die peacefully, and sometimes triumphantly; while those of an opposite character, for the most part, leave the world, either in a state of stupified insensibility and unconcern, or under the overwhelming pressure of just apprehension and alarm. The closing period of human existence is also, unquestionably, a season in many respects highly favourable to the discovery of real character. Then the mask of hypocrisy, if ever it has been

worn, as incapable of answering any further purpose, seems of its own accord to drop. The illusions of life vanish, the phantoms of vain hope disappear, and scenes of awful and eternal reality begin to rush upon the view. Then, also, the false props, which have hitherto sustained the mind, are apt to give way,—the foundation of sand to yield, and nothing but a well-grounded confidence in the Redeemer's merits, associated with the recollection of a life, sincerely, though imperfectly devoted to his service, can suggest a feeling of conscious security; and when, with a hope full of immortality, with a faith, whose bright and realizing perceptions are ready to be lost in actual beatific vision, the soul is enabled cheerfully to resign itself into the hands of its Saviour, no rational doubt can remain that such a spirit had been renewed after the image of Him who created it, and that now, after the termination of its earthly career, it will be safely received into glory.

Hence has arisen a strong inclination in many persons to regulate their views of their own future condition at the evident approach of death, or of that of their expiring friends and relatives, less by a deliberate and enlightened contemplation of their past course, including the whole assemblage of their Christian graces and endowments, as practically evinced in their conduct—their faith, and hope, and love, as manifested in their zealous and uniform obedience, than by a consideration of the sensible joy and consolation, which they experience in their last conflict. It is delightful, indeed—it is, doubt-

less, one of the noblest and sublimest scenes upon earth—it is a sight worthy the admiration of angels, to witness the triumphant exit of the faithful servant of Christ. It is worth living a life of suffering and self-denial, as it has been significantly remarked, if it was to serve no other purpose, and to have no other reference, than to secure a happy death. It is a privilege of no ordinary magnitude to have the light of heaven resplendently beaming upon the soul, while it is now preparing to enter upon that dark sojourn, which must be trodden, before it can reach the confines of the heavenly inheritance. If the glimmering visions of philosophy excited such an enthusiasm of delight in its votaries, as to make them sometimes wish to die in order to realize what their imaginations had dubiously and, in many respects, erroneously conceived, it is no wonder, that the Christian should be sometimes transported with emotions of the most rapturous elevation, when, at the close of his arduous career, and in full assurance of the divine favour, he is enabled, with the great Apostle of the Gentiles, to claim the imperishable crown, already as his own, and to grasp the palm of victory with that hand, which had hitherto wielded the sword of the Spirit.

The feelings of a dying hour, whether peaceful and triumphant, or the reverse, are, however, to be no further regarded than as they stand associated with more substantial and decisive principles of character. There doubtless may be the rapture of delusion, or the confidence of pharisaical self-complacence, which it would be, in the highest degree,



unscriptural and unsafe to admit as a convincing proof of saving conversion. And there may, on the other hand, be the depression of doubt and misgiving apprehension, occasioned by the peculiar tendency and overwhelming effect of bodily malady, or appointed by the infinite wisdom of heaven to check the presumption of too aspiring spirits, observing the descent of those burning and shining lights, which had run a course so bright and radiant through the firmament of the Christian church, and whose parting beams were expected to tinge the horizon with more than ordinary lustre. It may be, that they were destined to set under a cloud in order to teach those, who were left behind, the necessity of securing unto themselves a firmer basis for their hopes than the joys and triumphs of a death-bed—a foundation, the stability of which can neither be increased nor diminished by the emotions of expiring nature. These feelings, therefore, at that solemn hour are utterly out of place, as the test of the condition and final destiny of an individual.

We now bring this extended Inquiry to a close, and we trust that the preceding remarks exhibit a faithful and scriptural view of that important and essential element in the nature of man, which has been under discussion, as it is legitimately and necessarily connected with the Christian character, in reference both to the obligations of time, and the felicities of eternity. We have presented the positive and indispensable uses, and the possible misapplications and perversions of it, in such a consecutive and combined order, as appeared calculated to secure that calm

and sober, but at the same time lively and energetic exercise of the mental faculties, under the well balanced influence of which, accompanied with the divine blessing, a moral and religious character may be gradually formed, which will be “not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord”—“perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.”

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## CONCLUSION.

SUPERNATURAL INFLUENCE NECESSARY TO RENDER THE TRUTHS  
OF CHRISTIANITY EFFICACIOUS UPON THE HUMAN MIND  
AND CHARACTER.

HITHERTO we have been engaged in the consideration of the just application and the well directed energy of the faculties of the human mind, viewed, as thrown in some measure upon their own resources, and as exerting their own native capabilities. We have contemplated man in some of the most interesting aspects and relations, under which his character can be surveyed. We commenced our Estimate with a view of the influence, which the bare exercise of his intellectual powers upon subjects of literature and philosophy is calculated to exert upon his character. This influence we found to be in a high degree conducive to the amelioration of the moral habits, and the elevation of the mind and conduct above the grosser debasements of vice, and, if duly regulated, eminently favourable to the interests of genuine religion. And having thus endeavoured to show that the faculties of the mind, as applied to general subjects of knowledge and investigation, are accompanied in their progressive inquiries with salutary and beneficial effects upon the character, we proceeded to examine the proper use of those faculties as connected with the most important of all concerns, as directed to that great and comprehensive order of principles and facts, in reference to which alone they

are capable of reaching their highest state of sublimity and maturity, and upon the brighter discoveries of which they are destined to be employed throughout eternity. And adapting our survey to those phenomena of mind, which most prominently presented themselves to our notice, we first considered man in his most distinguishing characteristic as a Rational being. In this department of our inquiry, certain principles of judgment were laid down, by a due observance of which, Reason, so far from being an antagonist to faith and revelation, as has sometimes been supposed to be the case, may become a powerful auxiliary to both, receiving and consequently authenticating with the stamp of its cordial acceptance, the declarations of the latter, after an enlightened investigation of their character, and confirming the belief of the former by an accurate examination of its grounds.

We next considered man as a Voluntary being—using the term voluntary in this instance in a general sense as expressive of the possession of a faculty of volition, or a capability of choosing and preferring. To solve all the difficulties—to unravel all the intricacies—to carry our investigation into the very first and last grounds of this most profound and perplexing question, as it relates to the responsibility and moral agency of man, we scarcely ventured to attempt. To such a problem we can at best only apply the method of approximation. By a simple and unbiassed consideration of the facts of the case, as they evolve themselves in the process of actual observation and experience, we trust that, in the

preceding discussion, the question has at least been placed upon its right footing. It was made to appear with sufficient evidence, that man, in the exercise of volition, is bound by no such necessity, philosophical or moral, as would virtually destroy his liberty as an accountable being, while at the same time it was shown that neither is he possessed of any such freedom as exempts him from the influence of motives, or endues him with any imaginary power of self-determination, except in accordance with those views of present good, whether true or false, which exhibit themselves to his mind. Hence his responsibility appears to resolve itself into his capability, as a rational and intelligent being, of discovering, by the aid of those means which he possesses, what constitutes his chief good; for his duty runs parallel, and is identified in all its ramifications with the availing pursuit of that good. Such is the foundation of that view of human agency which was developed in the former pages.

In the third place, we were led to survey human nature in its relation to the divine Law as an expression of Duty and moral obligation. That Law we found to be based upon a comprehensive and benevolent regard to the well-being of man, and thus viewed it is seen to meet with a ready response from the Conscience, as that moral sense or instinct which forms an essential and most important part of the nature of man, as a rational and accountable being.

In the fourth place, we viewed man as an Imaginative being. In this department of our inquiry, it was shown that the lively faculty under consider-



ation, however liable to extravagance and abuse, is capable, under proper guidance and due control, of being directed to the noblest and most important purposes. As an original element of our intellectual nature, it cannot be supposed that it was intended to lie dormant, or to be utterly extinguished in reference to the most lofty and stupendous of all the subjects to which it can be applied. We therefore endeavoured to point out the various ends to which it may be rendered subservient, in the illustration and enforcement of divine truth, and entered at considerable length into an exposure of the evils calculated to result from its exorbitant or ill-regulated indulgence. By thus calling its energies into action, and guarding against its undue preponderance by providing seasonable checks in the well-balanced operation of other co-ordinate faculties, it may, doubtless, be made a powerful and salutary organ in augmenting the force, and in accelerating the movements of the machinery of the christian character.

We finally undertook to estimate the character of man in reference to the great business of religion as a Sensitive being—as a being endued with an original susceptibility of strong and varied feelings. Man, being so much a creature of emotion, and not only happy or miserable, but also virtuous or vicious, moral or depraved, spiritual or carnal, according to the prevailing tenor of his feelings; it is not for a moment to be imagined that so influential a part of his nature was designed to be cut off from all connection with a question, which involves

his most important relations and his highest destinies. The only consideration deserving of serious inquiry and attention is, how this powerful and all-pervading ingredient in the mental constitution may be most wisely and usefully called into operation. In the preceding investigation, certain principles were laid down, and attempted to be developed, by a due regard to which the inestimable advantages of Feeling, in the formation of the religious character, may be secured, and its dangers effectually avoided. The object of these correlative illustrations was to mark out the path of piety and safety, along which the enlightened Christian might advance to his destined goal, maintaining an equal distance from the polar chillness of lifeless formality, and the tropical heat of a lawless enthusiasm.

Thus we have contemplated man in the relation, which the chief constituents of his intellectual and moral nature bear to the most important of all questions. Our object has not been so much to analyze the faculties, or to investigate the physiology of his mind, as to seize upon those powers, which he is universally allowed to possess, and to view them in their legitimate exercise and application, as connected with that sublime order of objects and pursuits, upon which they are destined, if in the present state they are brought under due influence and control, to be employed in elevating and expanding progress throughout eternity. In the course of these inquiries, we have found, that in religion, considered with respect to its various doctrines, and principles, and prospects, there is

ample room for the exercise of every faculty of mind, and of every order of talent; that within its comprehensive range there is enough to employ the Reason of the inquisitive and acute, the Imagination of the fanciful and sublime, and the Feelings of the lively and impassioned. Nor can we conceive an instance of more daring rebellion against the high purposes of Heaven, and of more utter and complete frustration of the great end of man's intellectual existence, than the wilful and systematic diversion of these powers from the service of piety and truth; and when we witness this grievous desecration of lofty faculties, we are compelled to utter our indignant sorrow with the poet, and to exclaim,

“ When I behold a genius bright and base,  
Of towering talents and terrestrial aims,  
Methinks I see, as thrown from her high sphere,  
The glorious fragments of a soul immortal,  
With rubbish mixt and glittering in the dust.”

But in an Estimate of the human faculties it is important to bear in mind, as we are drawing our inquiries to a conclusion, what is the utmost extent of their capabilities. After they have been directed, in their highest state of cultivation and improvement—in the most vigorous and concentrated energy of operation, and under the most enlightened and judicious guidance, to the great business of religion, there is still a work to be effected—a change to be produced in the human soul, to which, of themselves, they are utterly inadequate. To render the Gospel efficacious—to enable Christianity to exert its gen-

nine and availing influence upon the character, there must descend a power from on high. As a necessary appendage, therefore, to an Estimate of the inherent Powers of the human mind, we shall subjoin a brief inquiry into the nature and necessity of those Influences of the Divine Spirit, without which all other efforts to promote personal or general religion will prove utterly unavailing.

It is an obvious and unquestionable fact, upon whatever principle it be accounted for, that there is a striking difference in the character of individuals subject to the same external influences, and under circumstances equally favourable to the operations of vital religion. Casting an eye abroad over the wide surface of professed Christianity, or even confining our view to any small section of this extensive territory, we shall be at no loss to discover the immense disparity which prevails. Some we find living in the habitual neglect of the plainest moral obligations, violating the most express injunctions of the divine law, without remorse, and appearing to bear the Christian name for no other purpose than to dishonour it. Others there are, who, exempt indeed from the ordinary allegations of palpable immorality, yet are altogether as destitute of the sentiments, the affections, and the graces of genuine piety, as those just specified. Under these two general modifications of character, varying from each other by every possible intermediate shade, may be comprehended the whole mass of the unbelieving world. But however greatly they may differ as to the degree of practical depravity at

which they have arrived, they all agree in these essential features of impiety in every form—a decided, though perhaps, in some instances, unconscious hostility to their Maker, an ungrateful rejection of the Redeemer, and a fatal disregard of their eternal interest. These habits, in many cases, they indulge in the midst of every thing that might be deemed best calculated to produce a reverse of conduct: surrounded with the light of Revelation—warned by the voice of a faithful Ministry—oft admonished in the impressive language of providential dispensations, and with the unavoidable conviction on their minds, that they are travelling with an uninterrupted pace towards a world where their destiny will admit of no change.

Another order of human beings there is, not excluding a very considerable variety among its constituent members, yet universally standing in entire opposition to these, which is distinguished no less by a strict regularity, propriety, and general consistency of outward deportment, than by a spirit of unaffected piety, pervading and universally influencing the feelings and dispositions of the heart. This latter class of men is separated from the rest of the species by a broad and visible line of distinction. The individuals, of which it is composed, form a peculiar and highly-favoured people:—enjoying the same external advantages—exposed to the same secular evils—having to contend with the same forms of temptation with the world at large, they bear a character pre-eminently their own. The principles by which they are governed—the motives by which they are actu-

ated—the great end at which they aim—the varied exercises of fear—of hope, and of desire, which alternately agitate and tranquillize their breasts, belong exclusively to themselves. While the generality of mankind, amidst all the diversity of their pursuits, have the whole of their attention directed to the objects of time, and scarce extend one serious thought, or a single joyous anticipation beyond the confines of the present world, *they* afford clear and satisfactory evidence, that the concerns of the transitory life, that now is, are a matter of very minor and secondary importance; and that with them the care of the immortal and imperishable spirit, as it is indeed beyond all comparison the most momentous, claims the chief regard. While the one exhibit a fatal indifference to all the interests of futurity—an indifference, spiritually considered, analogous to an utter destitution of life, and sensible perception in material beings; the other evince, upon every subject connected with the service of God, and their prospects beyond the grave, the liveliest and most earnest concern: they respectively walk in a different path, and breathe in a different element. The fact of such a difference existing is unquestionable; but for the solution of the difficulty, which it involves, we must look to a divine source of information. The dissimilarity in question, as we are plainly taught in the volume of inspiration, arises from the stubborn resistance which is given, in the one case, to the gracious suggestions of the divine Spirit, and the cheerful compliance, which is afforded in the other. The external means, in both instances, are the same;



but these means are utterly neutralized in their effects, where the agency of the Holy Spirit is withheld, or if prevented by the perverseness of a depraved Will from exerting its proper influence. It is to the want or the obstinate refusal of this powerful aid we are to attribute all the inefficiency of the divine Word itself, and of the human ministrations of that word—all the deadness and lifeless insensibility to the concerns of an eternal world, which so lamentably prevails among mankind. And it is to the gracious communication of the same mighty agency, that we are to ascribe the whole success of every species of outward instrumentality; as well in the case of individuals, as in that of the Christian community at large.

If any *are* quickened from the death of sin, from a state of moral darkness and inactivity in which no spiritual perception, thought, or affection is exercised; if any *are* roused to a deep sense of their want and danger, of the evil of sin, and of their need of holiness; if they *have* their understandings illumined by the bright beams of truth, their hearts animated by the sublime and elevating principles of the Gospel, and their affections powerfully attracted to the things which are above; if any *are* enabled to separate themselves from a world that lieth in wickedness, to renounce its corrupt maxims, and to relinquish its vain pursuits, and to enter with a real earnestness of heart upon the way that leadeth unto life; it is not that they had any previous tendency towards the truths that they have embraced, and to the course they have adopted, more than the rest of mankind.

It is not that the mere means of their conversion, simply and independently considered, carried with them an irresistible force of conviction, and a weight of subordinating influence, which it was impossible not to feel, or to feel and at the same time withstand. These they probably *had* resisted for a long period of time ; the effect is, therefore, to be primarily attributed to another cause. It was produced by the Holy Spirit working *with* and through the means. The faithful exhibition of the threatenings of the law, and of the proffered blessings and privileges of the Gospel, may have been employed, indeed, as an instrument, but it was the Spirit who infused the vivifying principle. The sword of the divine word may have been used, but it was the hand of the Spirit alone, which could effectually have wielded it. The dispensations of Providence, and the external ordinances of grace, may have co-operated in preparing the mind for the reception of the truth, and in moulding the character into a form suitable to its subsequent operation, but it was the Spirit alone, who gave and could have given life.

With a view of exhibiting the nature and necessity of the grace of the Holy Spirit, we shall briefly survey its operations under two leading aspects ;—first, in the primary communication of a Divine life into the soul ; and secondly, in the subsequent effects produced by his influence upon the general character. But before we enter upon the subject, there are two questions which it appears necessary previously to settle, *the distinct and personal exist-*

*ence of the Holy Ghost, and the reality of his agency.*

With respect to the first of these questions, there are persons not a few—persons not deficient in an acquaintance with the literal statements of Divine revelation, and, if mental attainment, critical skill, and intellectual acumen alone were adequate to the task, fully competent to judge of its meaning, who go to a much greater length than honestly to express their ignorance “whether there be any Holy Ghost.” Theirs is not a hesitating assent, or a wavering and unsettled persuasion, arising from an obscurity of conception, occasioned by partial and indistinct intimations; they, on the contrary, boldly and unequivocally deny the existence of that sacred and glorious Person, whose work we are now to discuss. It would be a mere affectation of candour to admit—it would exceed the just limits of the most expansive charity to allow, that they have been led to this view by a *simple* and *unbiassed* study of the Scriptures, the only safe and legitimate source of information respecting the Being of Jehovah, his attributes, and his mode of subsistence. There we find the real and distinct existence of the Divine Spirit so clearly exhibited, so plainly implied in the ascription to him of offices, in declarations, in addresses and appeals, which can, with any consistency of language, refer only to a real and distinct agent, that it is difficult to suppose any man of unprejudiced mind could rise from the perusal of these records, and persuade himself that the active power, to which in an individual and independent

character so much had been attributed, was nothing but a quality or an attribute, which it was deemed convenient to personify, in order to convey a livelier idea of its operations. Without, therefore, referring to particular passages, which would be endless, and for those, who are acquainted with their Bibles, unnecessary, we may consider this question sufficiently determined.

But the other point, which was mentioned, that of the reality of the Spirit's influence upon the human soul, has been a subject still more extensively controverted. By some this has been wholly discarded and denied, by others it has been explained and modified into a perfect neutrality. The principal objection to the truth of a supernatural influence, operating upon the mind of man, seems to be that such an influence, if exerted, destroys the freedom of human agency—the single circumstance which renders man a proper subject of moral discipline, and invests him with the dignified but awful character of a responsible and accountable being. To this it is added, that the notion of a sacred energy, such as is generally maintained, diffused through the soul, and regulating its various powers, is a thing in itself scarcely to be understood or conceived.

To us every thing is apt to appear strange and incredible, if not utterly impossible, which does not fall under the immediate cognizance of our senses. What is matter of daily and hourly experience, indeed, we never think of denying; but if we take the trouble to reflect, we shall find that the things are

exceedingly few, if there be any, which we may be said fully to comprehend. Where is the man who can undertake to give a satisfactory explanation of the mutual operation—the reciprocal influences of the human body and spirit upon each other; for few will think that the difficulty will be lessened by maintaining that all is body, in the usual gross sense of the expression, and that there is no spirit at all? Who has ever been found to understand the secret mechanism, by which mind acts upon matter, and accurately to describe the method by which a never-ceasing interchange of affection is carried on between the corporeal and intellectual systems? Who has ever had the sagacity to discover how the mere utterance of an articulate sound by one man should raise in the mind of another a train of images precisely similar to those which were present to his own, and by that means fill his soul with the most delightful or the most melancholy,—the most sublime or the most degrading sensations. Upon these and a variety of other topics of the most ordinary occurrence, a child might start a thousand difficulties, which it would baffle the skill of the profoundest philosopher to solve. The fact is, that while our knowledge of these matters, if duly cultivated and improved, is sufficient for the general purposes of life and conduct, we have a perfect understanding of scarcely any of them. How then are we to proceed? Are we to believe nothing because we are unable to comprehend every thing? Are we to reject the clearest testimony of experience because it does

not, at the same time, supply us with a complete solution of every problem? Are we to renounce the character of percipient and reasonable beings, because we are not omniscient? Shall we deny that our souls have a real influence upon our bodies because we cannot exactly perceive *how* that influence is exerted? The part of wisdom is obviously to adapt our views to that state in which we find ourselves placed; to regulate our assent by that measure of evidence, and by that degree of light and capacity which God has been pleased to afford us, to steer a course equally remote from the credulity which believes every thing, and the scepticism, which believes or affects to believe nothing.

We have been led to these remarks by the known and avowed objection of many persons to the doctrine of a spiritual and divine agency in the renovation of the human heart, arising from the mysterious, and, as they maintain, unintelligible nature of this agency. From persons so generally devoted to scientific pursuits, and who cannot be unacquainted with the principles of analogical reasoning, this objection appears to me not a little surprising. If it be a sufficient ground for rejecting a point of doctrine, that it is involved in some degree of obscurity, that we cannot distinctly trace it in all its connections, and in all its bearings, then we affirm, that there is sufficient ground for rejecting almost every principle of natural philosophy. What would become of the scheme of the modern astronomy, if the theory of attraction were discarded, because we could give no clear account of it?



Who could scientifically navigate the ocean, if the operation of the magnet was discredited, because it is not known how it acts? If, indeed, disbelief is invariably to accompany every instance of difficulty of comprehension, we shall have scarcely a single speculative tenet, to which we can give our assent. According to this the infidel is justified in rejecting a written Revelation; nay, the atheist can hardly be condemned for denying a governing Providence, and the very existence of a Supreme Disposer.

If these observations be just, it is quite clear that all objections against the personality and agency of the Holy Spirit, arising from the circumstance of these points being surrounded with a veil of partial mystery, when brought under the contemplation of our confined powers, are null, void, and irrelevant. These, therefore, like every other point, which does not acknowledge the uncontrolled power of Reason, must evidently be determined by the simple voice of Scripture; and it may, without hesitation, be affirmed, that upon few points does this final arbiter of all human disputations pronounce with greater clearness and decision, than upon that, which we are now considering. In the sacred volume, the Holy Spirit is repeatedly spoken of as a distinct Agent. He is promised as a sanctifier—a comforter—a guide—as the giver of life, and the author of holiness; and if these offices do not involve a reality of distinct existence as well as a reality of operation, words must surely be destitute of meaning.

Having thus endeavoured to dispose of the objections, which appeared to stand in front of the subject, we shall now proceed to consider the work of the Spirit in the two points of view which were proposed. The errors and false notions, which have been so thickly grafted upon this most important doctrine, will be detected in the endeavour to give an account of its genuine character. If it can be shown what it *really is*, there will be no difficulty in discovering what it is not.

In the first place, then, we are to consider the influences of the Holy Spirit in the primary communication of a divine life into the soul. The insufficiency of ordinary means, unaccompanied by a divine power to effect that mighty change in the soul of man, which is expressed by the figure of a resurrection from the dead, has been evinced by experience, as well as affirmed in Scripture. It is hardly possible to look into the state of religion in Christian countries, Christian congregations, and Christian families, without being convinced of this fact. It is a very natural error into which young converts are apt to fall, and into which some eminent ministers, before the commencement of their labours, have fallen, that it requires only a clear, affectionate, and forcible statement of truth, to produce deep and lasting conviction in the minds of all who hear it. Having themselves experienced the efficacious power of grace communicated through the medium of outward ordinances—aware, at the same time, that they were as blind, as inconsiderate, as destitute of any tendency of affection towards

God as any *can* be, and that, as *subjects*, they had not the slightest advantage over those around them, they find it difficult to conceive that the sentiments which are so fresh and lively in their own minds, and carry with them such a force of self-evident demonstration, wherever they are duly appreciated, should not meet with a ready reception in the breasts of others. Under the influence of a somewhat similar illusion, it is possible that, in these times of benevolence and pious zeal, the expectations of Christian philanthropists have somewhat outstripped those probabilities of success attendant upon the means of grace, to which experience would have justified them to look forward. It may have been deemed, upon a disproportionate and too ardent calculation, that it was only necessary to supply every house with the invaluable treasure of a Bible—that it needed only to raise the standard of the Cross in the midst of the wilderness of heathenism, and to sound the glad tidings of salvation through a Redeemer in the ears of Jewish unbelief, in order to accomplish a general reformation of character; and that by a sort of omnipotence necessarily accompanying these means, the desired change could not fail of being effected. Fact, however, has proved what a due consideration of Jehovah's conduct in the ordinary administrations of his grace could not but have suggested. Plans of benevolence, on the most extensive scale, and conducted upon the soundest principles, are in continual operation; streams of knowledge fresh from the fountain of inspiration are diffusing themselves

over every corner of the globe; the Gospel of Christ is, from sabbath to sabbath, proclaimed by thousands of faithful messengers; all that is powerful in human talent, all that is simple, ardent, and devoted in Christian zeal, is daily called into exercise; but the actual success attendant on these efforts, while it is abundantly sufficient to incite to still greater activity, yet must be acknowledged to be far from correspondent with the magnitude of the exertions already put forth. Millions read the word of God with a professed belief of its contents, without receiving the slightest salutary influence from its lessons; a number, perhaps, equal, or still greater, hear the word preached, without seeming to think it at all necessary that they should be doers of the word as well as hearers.

The reason of this is doubtless that these persons have no life in them. They want a principle, which no agency less than a divine is capable of bestowing upon them. If the instrumentality of the written word, and of human teaching alone, was sufficient, they would long since have been made alive unto righteousness. Before they can rise into life, a quickening power must descend upon them from above. To understand the full force of this assertion, it must be recollected that the natural state of man is that of death in trespasses and sins without holiness, without grace, without the least spiritual feeling. At the fall he received a shock which paralysed and numbed every limb—every nerve of the internal man, and left him a blasted, withered form of humanity, without so much

as a power to feel his misery. While he remains in this condition, the simple application of external means is incapable of imparting the least degree of salutary influence. The feelings of his nature may, indeed, in some measure, be wrought upon, as the fibres of once animated but now lifeless matter may be put in motion by the operations of galvanism, but a sensation truly vital and spiritual it cannot awaken. He must be spiritually revived before he can spiritually feel: he must be endued with a celestial principle which will act as a *soul within a soul*, before he can experience the emotions and perform the functions of a living being. And as the total failure of the outward machinery of religion, while unaccompanied by a quickening energy, proves the indispensable necessity of a divine power to render it effectual in any case, so those particular instances in which it is found successful, are equally illustrative of the same truth. It is the primary basis of all reasoning and philosophy that similar causes produce similar effects; or, to exhibit the same idea in a modified and somewhat expanded form, that a similar agency, operating upon similar subjects, will result in the display of the same general phenomena. In the application of this principle to the point under consideration, without intending to carry the analogy to such an extent as would, in the slightest degree, infringe upon the accountableness of man as a rational being, we remark that the agency generally employed consists of the various modes of instruction, by providential occurrences, by written re-

cords, and more especially by ministerial labours. The subjects to which this agency is directed, are human beings, all by nature corrupt, degraded, and totally destitute of spiritual life and feeling. But what is the effect? On a supposition of the identity or perfect similarity of the influence exerted, we might have naturally expected a uniformity of result, either invariably successful, or invariably abortive. But the fact is totally otherwise. While the great majority of mankind remains untouched, unaffected, unrenewed, some discover no uncertain or equivocal symptoms of an almost entire transformation of character having been wrought in them. Assuming it as an allowed and established point, that all the individuals of the human species are, by nature, tainted with a similar stain of pollution, and present similar impediments to the renovating operations of divine grace, the circumstance of *some* being awakened from their fatal slumbers, and of the rest continuing to sleep in perilous indifference upon the brink of everlasting ruin, seems capable of no other mode of explanation, than the supposition of an influence being made to operate upon the one class, which does not effectually reach the other. If the rams' horns, employed by divine appointment in the demolition of the walls of Jericho, had been blown around any other town, or succession of towns, similarly fortified, without producing the same effect, it would doubtless have been concluded, that the difference was to be referred to another power than was inherent in these feeble instruments. If, while Ezekiel was pronouncing



the heaven-directed call over the dry bones of the valley, some few had started into life, while the rest remained in the same state of inanimate quiescence, the disparity of effect would assuredly, and most justly, have been traced to a higher source than was to be found in the Prophet's voice, or in the materials to which he was commanded to address himself; it would have been deemed an abundant proof of a divine attendant power, that any should be quickened and fashioned into a human form. We intend not, in these illustrations, to neutralize the essential difference between physical and moral subjects, as susceptible of the operations of an external agency. The distinction is, doubtless, great and important. But it is assuredly no less true of the latter, than it is of the former, that when an effect has been produced upon them for which there was no adequate inherent cause, it must be resolved into an influence from without, and the efficiency of that influence must be estimated, whatever peculiarities of mental constitution may have interfered with its operations, according to its actual results. Where a saving change has been produced, it must be ascribed unto a divine energy, accompanying the means of grace. Where no such change has taken place, it is a clear proof that either the same energy has not been imparted in the same degree, or that a larger proportion of it was necessary, not to render the individual inexcusable, for enough may have been communicated for this awful purpose, but in order to be really and practically availing

to his conversion. To delineate the exact manner in which the Holy Spirit operates upon the mind in the primary communication of life unto the soul, is impossible. The vivifying process we can but very indistinctly conceive. Of the man quickened by his influences, we can say little more than that, whereas he was blind, he now seeth—whereas he was dead, he is now alive. The means, in conjunction with which the Spirit's influences generally descend, and without the use of which we are never warranted to expect his aid, are, for the most part, the study of the divine word, and the preaching of the Gospel. His office, at this period, in the progress of the character, appears to be chiefly to prepare the mind, and to render the heart susceptible of the impressions of revealed truth, as it is the action of fire only which renders the wax a fit recipient of the impress of the seal. As a sufficient guard against the enthusiastic abuse of the doctrine of a divine influence, it must ever be maintained, that the Spirit reveals no new truths, makes no fresh communications from heaven, but merely so disposes and affects the various faculties of the soul, as that they may be able to perceive with clearness, and to feel with force, the truths already made known. To see the objects around us in the light of the meridian sun, it is only necessary that the eyes be opened; to feel the warmth of the same glorious luminary, it is only necessary that the sensitive powers be awake and lively. This preparation of the mind for the admission of divine truth is expressed by terms correspondent

with those faculties of the soul with which it is more immediately concerned. As applied to the understanding, it is called illumination—"Having the eyes of your understanding enlightened;" as it regards the heart and affections, it is denominated sanctification; as it is the incipient germ of a thorough renovation of the whole character, it is expressed by the comprehensive term of regeneration.

Natural life, as well as spiritual, separately and simply considered, we should find it extremely difficult to define. We discover either principle only by the capacities with which it is attended, and by the functions which it performs. The moment that the soul becomes endued with divine life, it is capable of views and feelings, to which it was before an utter stranger. Roused, as out of an inert and unconscious lethargy, it instantly begins to exercise its faculties in a manner wholly new and peculiar, and is subject to a train of warm and lively impressions from objects, which previously did not, in the least, or but very vaguely and incoherently, affect it.

Of the effects of this powerful agency, upon the mind and character, our notice must be very limited and partial. The mention of life, as communicated to a being that was destitute of it, instantly leads the mind to the contemplation of a very material and important change in the essential character of that being. Whatever he may have been before, it is obvious that he must now be possessed of very different and very superior properties. The nature of the qualities, which have been thus superinduced

upon him, will correspond with the nature of the vital principle that has been imparted to him. The life under our present consideration has been justly entitled "the life of God in the soul of man," and must, therefore, have a direct tendency in all its operations, to form the character into a similitude of Him, who is the author and bestower of it. The Spirit who quickens is a Holy Spirit, and, in the communication of life, acts in his own genuine character. Hence, the influence which he imparts is calculated to create the soul anew after the divine image, in the same way as it is the nature of fire to convert every element with which it comes in contact, and upon which it acts, into a congeniality with itself. Let us then attempt to trace this assimilating process through a few steps of its progressive advancement:—

First, see the individual under review, lying dead in the insensibility of sin, and surrounded with the corruptions of nature, without one ray of light—without one spark of holiness; the victim of delusion, the slave of passion, and the dupe of the great adversary of man. But now the hour has arrived, when, as one important event in the evolution of the eternal purposes of Jehovah, he is to experience a resurrection unto life—the hour in which there is to descend upon him from on high a power, capable of rousing him out of the sleep of death. Opening the eyes of his understanding, he beholds in a clear and most deeply interesting point of view, a variety of objects, which before he did not even dimly descry. His faculty of vision is, indeed, at first, far from perfect; but he sees with distinctness enough to feel

assured, that the objects of his contemplation are *realities*, and not the shadowy scenes of a dreaming fancy. Things of which he had hitherto only heard the name, and the sound of which had passed through his ears like the gale which blew over his head, without leaving the least impression, now assume, in the eye of his sober estimation, a character of the most awful importance. The glories of heaven—the miseries of hell—the evil of sin—the beauty of holiness—the love of Christ, and the various blessings of the new covenant, he no longer regards as phantoms of weak and speculations of visionary minds, but he considers them as matters of the most momentous practical interest. The false notions which he had imbibed respecting his own character—the just demands of the divine law, and the means of restoration unto favour and peace, he has cordially renounced, under a full conviction of their incorrectness and absurdity. And as objects appear to increase in magnitude, and are perceived with greater precision in proportion as they are approached, so his views upon the several subjects that have been mentioned, are found to grow still more bright and vivid as he is advancing towards the horizon of time, and comes into closer contact with the realities of eternity.

But it is in the affections of the heart, and in the conduct of the life, that the effects of the Spirit's influences display themselves in the loveliest forms, and in their highest glory. Antecedently to the operations of that mighty Agent upon the soul, the breast was the seat of carnal, depraved, and malign-

nant passions, which, at the slightest degree of irritation, were ever ready to burst into a flame. The first-fruit of the Spirit is love—love towards God. Like a mass of ice, melting before the warm beams of the sun, the heart, which in a state of nature is frozen into enmity against God, touched by the softening influence of the Spirit, dissolves into pure and genuine affection; the carnal mind, laying aside its hatred and dislike of his character, and its determined stubbornness of opposition to his law, is converted into a spiritual mind, which delights in the contemplation of his perfections, glows with gratitude for his kindness, and enters with alacrity into the whole plan of his government—a mind which derives the chief source of its enjoyment from the experience of his favouring presence, and draws the motives of its obedience from the fountain of redeeming love. It is also *love to man*. The same subordinating power which slew the enmity against God, and kindled in its stead the flame of ardent affection towards him, has also expanded, into a free exercise of every benevolent and disinterested emotion, the heart which under every blast of unkindness was ready to be contracted into selfishness, or hardened into insensibility. The mind that was ever prone to regard rather with feelings of jealousy than with sincere delight the happiness and the superior advantages of others, that deemed every instance of ill-treatment a justifiable ground of hatred and ill-treatment in return, and every instance of ingratitude a sufficient reason for withholding kindness, has now become generous in its



principles, tender and amiable in its sympathies, and patient of injuries and persecutions. Not unconcerned for the temporal welfare of mankind, and not backward to contribute to the utmost extent of the possessed means toward the promotion of their present happiness—its chief anxiety it will consider as justly due to their eternal interests. Viewing them as creatures made for immortality, its most earnest and persevering efforts will be devoted to the still more important purposes of securing (so far as its endeavours may succeed) their well-being in a world to come. Necessarily associated with this exercise of universal love will be the other virtues, graces, and endowments, of the Christian character—all blending into a soft and harmonious combination, and all flowing forth as so many streams from that fountain of living waters, which the Divine Spirit has opened in the heart. There Joy mingled with gratitude, and elevated by Hope, arising in part from the consideration of miseries escaped, and in part from the anticipation of felicities to be enjoyed—from a sense of the privileges now possessed, and of the blessedness still in reserve, triumphs as in its natural element. There Peace, meek, gentle, and serene, resulting from the subjugation of the appetites and passions—from the banishment of vain and irregular desires—from a soothing persuasion of being in a state of reconciliation with God, through the death and righteousness of his Son, diffuses a calm and delightful composure through all the powers of the soul. There forbearance, under every species of provocation, resignation

to the divine will, under the most trying dispensations of providence, and amidst the most afflictive scenes of human life, will check the first risings of anger, and silence the voice of complaint. There faith in all the variety of its operations will act with energy and vigour, reposing an unhesitating trust in all the declarations of Jehovah—confiding with unshaken reliance in the meritorious life and atoning death of the Redeemer, as the sole and all-sufficient ground of its hope of salvation, looking forward with a realizing eye to the glories of a future world, amid the clouds and darkness of present sufferings, and directing, as a primary power, the whole movements of the conduct. There the flame of Devotion burns; Prayer delights to make known its request; Praise to offer up its incense of thanksgiving; holy Contemplation to unfold its opinions, and to soar amidst scenes yet remote. There, also, the duties of temperance and self-denial; the rigid restraint, within their due and appropriate bounds, of the several faculties and affections of the soul, will meet with the requisite share of attention. There, in short, Goodness, in all its constituent principles; whether it regards God or man; whether it relates to the understanding, the heart, or the life—to the habits of the mind, or the regulation of the conduct, proves its existence, vindicates its character, and evinces its celestial origin.

These are the general and leading effects of the influences of the Holy Spirit in the formation of the Christian character. It is hardly necessary to say, that these effects do not at first, nor indeed at

any period during the present existence, exhibit themselves in a state of perfection. At first, the principle of life is simply imparted. This principle, is, indeed, perfect in its kind, and imperishable in its nature; but that it may be unfolded in all its capabilities, that it may be fully developed in all its tendencies, that it may diffuse itself through the whole system, it will require much time, much care, much prayer, and much diligent exertion. In its progress, a progress, notwithstanding, steady and uniformly advancing, it will have to encounter much opposition, and to contend with many a bitter adversary. Like a spark of fire, occasionally smothered by the base materials with which it is surrounded, it may sometimes appear almost utterly extinguished; but, as it is a spark from heaven, it defies all the powers of earth and hell altogether to extinguish it. Gradually it will work its way through the mass of corruption which overlays it, and spread itself through the whole character, consuming what is incorrigible alloy, and purifying what is capable of such a process.

And as the influences of the Holy Spirit affect the character of individuals, such, doubtless, must be their effect upon nations and communities; and it is in no small degree gratifying to reflect, that the period is approaching, and is probably not very distant, when the Spirit shall be poured upon all flesh,—when, like a shower of reviving and fertilizing rain, He will descend upon the wide field of the world, and invest it as with a robe of mantling dew, quickening every plant, and refreshing every blossom. At present the field of human existence

exhibits an aspect at once exhilarating and melancholy—exhilarating when we contemplate the stir and activity of the many diligent and faithful labourers that are scattered over its surface;—when we witness the mighty preparations that are going forward in it;—when we observe the rare combination of intellect, feeling, and practical effort which is brought to bear on its improvement; when we notice the noble machinery which wisdom and love have erected and put in vigorous operation over its several parts, and when we consider all this in connection with the infallible assurance which we have, that ultimately the means will be crowned with the most complete success—with that promise of Jehovah, which affirms that the time *will* come when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the whole face of the earth, when the spirit shall be poured in plentiful effusion from on high, and, as the result of his renovating influence, the wilderness shall become a fruitful field. But it presents, on the other hand, an aspect in no small degree melancholy, when it is considered how very scanty has been the produce hitherto reaped from the diversified labours that have been expended, how very disproportionate, upon the ordinary principles of calculation, has been the amount of the fruit actually gathered in, to the amount of the seed which has been disseminated; how small a portion of the habitable globe has yet been gained over from the usurped dominions of the prince of darkness, to yield to the peaceful, privileged government of the Son of God, and how far is that intimation

from being yet realized, by which we are taught to anticipate the time when the kingdoms of the earth shall become the Lord's and his Christ's.

I do not bring forward these latter remarks, in order to throw a character of abortiveness and inutility over the efforts of Christian zeal. No, let it ever be recollected, that to be favoured with *any* real success, though it should be confined to the conversion and final salvation of one soul, would be more than an adequate compensation for the united, the continued exertions of the whole Christian world. In the progress of eternity it will be seen that the destiny of one immortal being involves a greater amount of happiness or misery than had ever been experienced through all the revolutions of time in the countless variety of its separate interests; nay, if the labours of Christian benevolence were attended with no ostensible success whatever, still if the command to labour be express and peremptory, the duty would be clear and imperative, and we should be no more justified in neglecting it than Ezekiel would have been in foregoing the work of prophecy, because the animating principle did not descend at the first annunciation of his message. His business was to prophesy; it was God's to endue with life. At the present time we see a general commotion, excited by the voice of Christian instruction, over that deep and extensive valley, in which a vast proportion of the human species lies scattered and dead. We behold the new and unexampled impression conducted as by electric agency from one corner of

the earth to another. We witness the dispersed particles, the dissevered limbs, which may hereafter form component parts of the body of Christ, which is his church, seeming to have a disposition to unite and assume somewhat of a consolidated shape. But one thing is still wanting, and it is that, without which all efforts, however persevering and well-directed, will fail of their end, the most encouraging appearances, the most animating prospects, and the most sanguine anticipations result in utter disappointment. This is that quickening spirit, that breath of the Almighty, which gives the Gospel all its efficacy, truth all its force, and duty all its vitality.

The outward temple is erecting by the labour of a thousand busy hands, a Divine blessing evidently attends upon its progress, and contributes to its glorious completion by resources and facilities, on which there was no ground to calculate. What remains—what is essential to its full perfection, and what, therefore, it becomes us devoutly to implore is, that the sacred presence—the Shekina of the Divine glory, and the medium of Divine communications—should descend into it and consecrate it to Jehovah's honour. To drop the language of metaphor, what we want is, that God's Holy Spirit who, alone, as we have abundantly shown, is the giver of grace and life, should come down and pour the abundance of his influence upon us, as individuals occupying various stations and offices, and as social bodies constituting different orders in the civil or religious world,—upon our rulers, and those



in authority over us, that they may be willing to aid, by their countenance and influence, the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, not from mere motives of policy and conciliation, but from an unfeigned desire of promoting the interests of piety and truth—upon the bishops of our church, and our ecclesiastical governors in general, that they may be taught to exercise the high powers with which they are invested with zeal and integrity, and with a sincere aim at the glory of God, as involved in the faithful discharge of the important functions of their office—upon all our subordinate labourers in the vineyard of Christ, that by their fidelity, their diligence, and their devotedness of heart to the great work in which they are engaged, by the soundness of their doctrine, and the purity of their lives, they may be the honoured instruments of bringing many souls into a knowledge of the Saviour, of awakening the heedless, of instructing the ignorant, and of consoling the afflicted—upon our congregations, that by the warmth of their affections, by the correctness of their principles, and by the consistency of their lives, they may adorn the Gospel of Christ, and make it evident, that the labours of their ministers have not been spent in vain upon them—upon our families, that they may be families calling upon the name of the Lord in sincerity and truth—upon every member of the community, that, according to his means and capabilities, he may make it his endeavour to fulfil the great end of his being, by rendering himself wholly subservient to the purposes of grace, and to the advancement

of the divine glory, and with special emphasis we would add—upon those noble Institutions, which, of late, have sprung up in our land, having for their sole, their exalted, their disinterested object, the promotion of the honour of God, as combined with the present and future happiness of man; that they may be abundantly blessed in their labours of love; that the streams of living waters, which are continually emanating from their magnificent resources, and which have now diffused themselves over almost every portion of the globe, may prove, indeed, streams of salvation to many a dreary region; that the divine Word, which they have so widely disseminated, may be a word of power unto many souls; and that the devoted agents, whom they send forth, may, indeed, be the bearers of glad tidings of salvation to many glad and willing hearers.

For the success of these Institutions, so far as patronage, wealth, and talent, are concerned, we have ground to indulge a grateful confidence. They are, indeed, countenanced by the highest authorities, both ecclesiastical and civil; their treasures are supplied by the munificence of the most opulent, and their interests are supported and maintained by the ablest and most endowed in the various departments of genius and knowledge. While, therefore, we should not fail to be duly thankful for the general disposition to spread abroad the knowledge of a Saviour, which now prevails—a disposition, doubtless, to be finally traced to a divine agency, we must ever recollect, that it is not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Most High, that

the spiritual temple must be erected. Without his gracious influence, all those channels of blessing, which Christian benevolence has formed, will do no more towards conveying the real benefits of the Gospel, than the aqueducts, which interspersed the land of Egypt, could contribute towards fertilizing the soil without the necessary inundations of the Nile.

I know not whether it be necessary, as we draw these observations to a close, to subjoin one further cautionary, or rather explanatory, remark. It is this—that the consideration of the utter inefficacy of human efforts, unaccompanied by a divine power, as here stated, in no degree destroys the responsibility or neutralizes the obligations of man as an accountable and immortal being. His duty as a moral agent is a question wholly independent of that which we have now been discussing; and, indeed, there is guilt involved in the very circumstance, that by nature the state of his mind is such as to render the influence that we have been considering, indispensable to the renovation of his character. Let no one imagine, therefore, that he is to remain heedless and unconcerned, until some resistless impulse has roused him out of his lethargy—that labour and exertion on *his* part are premature and nugatory, until a resuscitating influence descends upon him from above. It is the Holy Spirit, alone, indeed, that can infuse a vivifying principle into the human soul, and inspire it with the requisite energy for motion and action, as it is the wind of heaven only which can effectually

waft a vessel over the ocean; but preparatory measures and subsequent co-operation in the due application and use of these measures are equally necessary in both cases, and in neither is there reason to calculate upon success, where these are not judiciously and efficiently applied.

Such is the view, which a calm and unprejudiced survey of the Faculties of man in connection with the discoveries of Revelation and the phenomena of the Moral Universe appears to suggest. Such are the uses, to which it appears to have been designed by their gracious and beneficent Author, that they should be applied in connection with the final and paramount End of human existence. To the realization of this result—the manifestation of the glory of God as inseparably connected with the welfare of His creatures, they are, in all their varied exercises to be uniformly subservient, and as directed to this object, they are doubtless destined to rise to higher degrees of power and perfection throughout the progress of Eternity.

THE END.



## WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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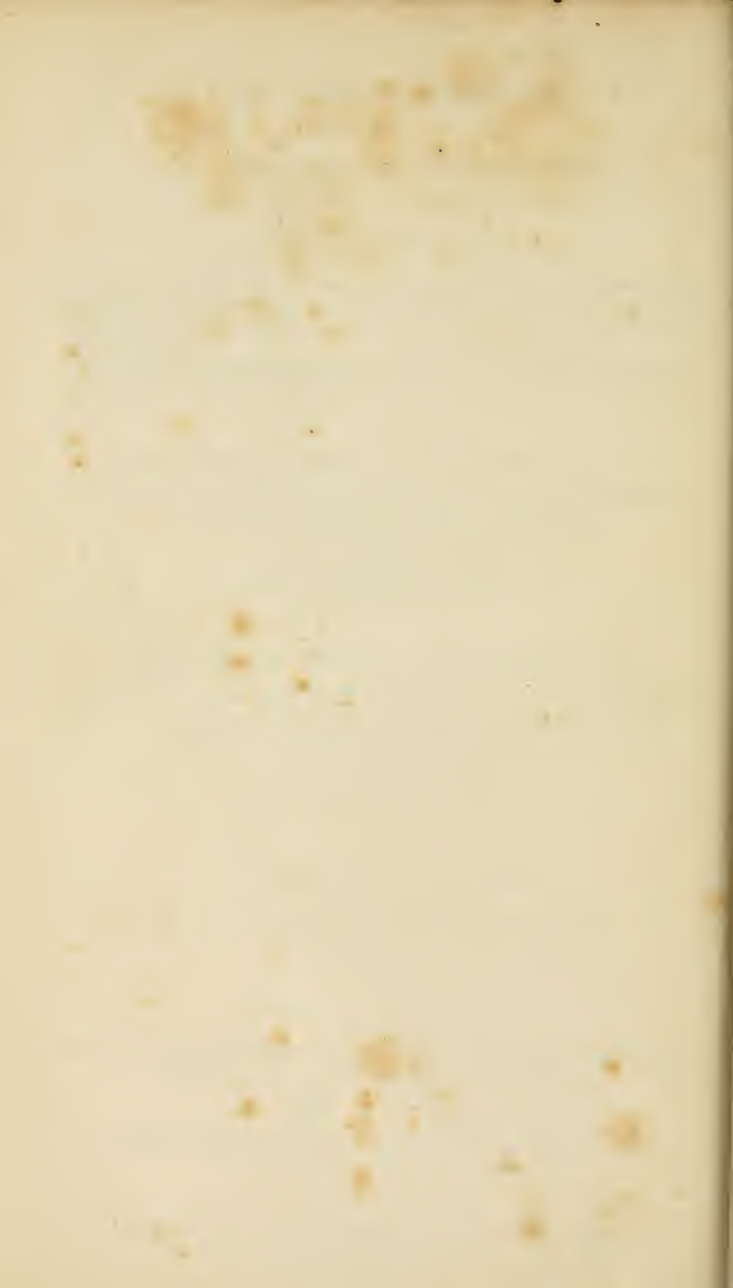
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